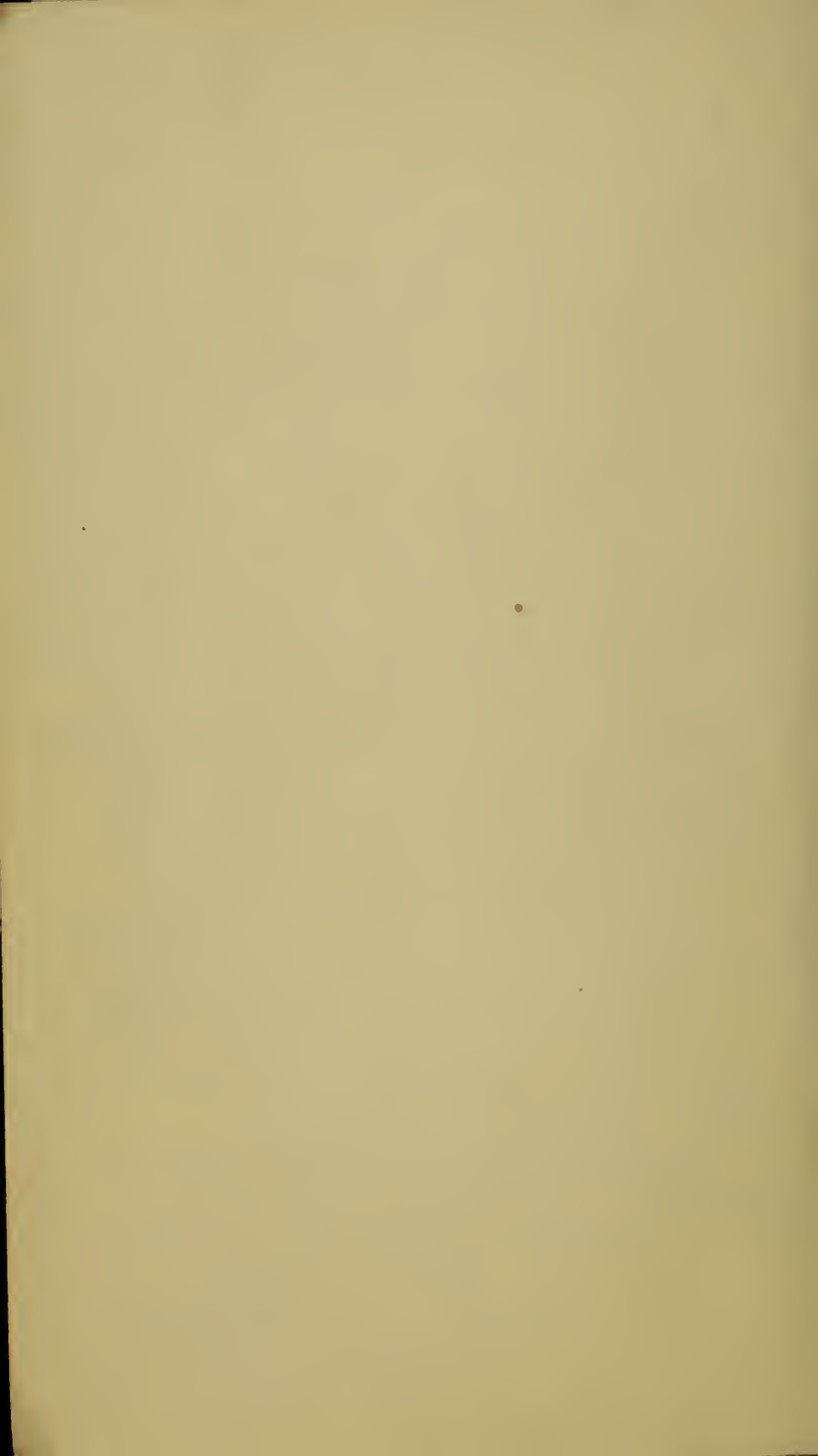








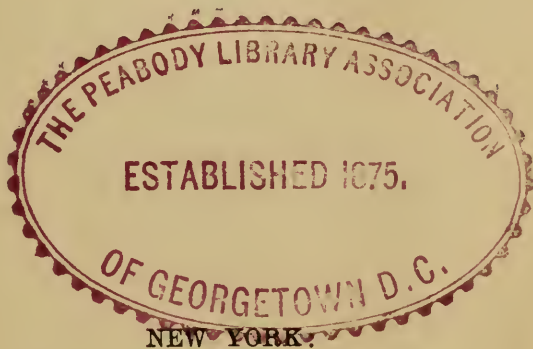


Trav. France

LIFE IN PARIS

LETTERS ON ART, LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

BY
ARSENE HOUSSAYE



R. WORTHINGTON, 750 BROADWAY.
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LIFE IN PARIS.

THE NEW PLAY BY SARDOU—THE CELEBRITIES
OF THE "FIRST NIGHT"—RIVAL DINNER PAR-
TIES—SOCIAL DISSIPATION.

PARIS, Dec. 8, 1874.

*To the Athenians and the Atheniennes of the New
World, Greeting:*



HAT I know least about is my begin-
ing," says the poet when he begins
to speak of the human heart. I am
like the poet. I also vault over the official pre-
sentation. Have I not already left you my card
in the form of a Romance, which you have
probably never read, but which you may have
glanced at, so as to have the privilege of speak-
ing ill of it? And you were right, Madame!
The romances in action at Paris or New York
are the only ones worthy of your curiosity.
The romance which you love is that which you
write yourself in your heart. I might abuse your

indulgence by beginning with a preface, but I am too much a man of the world to be a pedant ; I suppress the rising of the curtain, to give you at once the true comedy.

It is the Comedy of Paris, where you already play your part by virtue of your millions, Monsieur—by virtue of your beauty, Madame. Which is the cleverer, millions or beauty?

To view rightly the Parisian Comedy, one needs the American eye, and perhaps I shall have the advantages of it. I have in my neighborhood a Philadelphia or Washington lady (not to dot my i's too exactly), whom I meet everywhere, even at home, although she is usually everywhere else, in her rage for seeing everything. She will denounce those masks where I have not been able to penetrate the secrets of the passions of the last quarter of an hour. Do not ask me the name of your compatriot. As, at a masked ball, she will tell me for your benefit a thousand and one stories caught here and there ; but if *her* mask is lifted, she will say no more. She would content herself with that diplomatic language of women, who speak only

to disguise their thoughts. Ask the *ingénues* of the *Théâtre Français* if it is not so. I merely tell you that your compatriot has the dazzling beauty of women at thirty years, for she is still ripening on the wall, worthy the plucking of Monsieur de Balzac ; but let one last sunbeam come, and she will attain the declining beauty of "memories and regrets."

In speaking of the diplomatic language, I must preserve a clever speech of Madame Henry de Pène at the first representation of *La Haine*. Some one said to her, pointing out with her fan the box of a Foreign Minister, "He has perfectly the air of a diplomatist, which proves," she said, "that he is a bad diplomatist." And, in truth, the true diplomatist is the one who seems to see nothing, and understands nothing. M. de Talleyrand always had an absent-minded air. They thought him absent, but he was always at home. As for Monsieur de Metternich, he always said "I don't understand." He understood before any one spoke.

The young Princess de Metternich has the same talent of her father-in-law, all which did

not save either Austria or France, her second fatherland. For you know that she persists in breathing the air of the Champs Elysées, like the Princess Mathilde, who said to me that brilliant evening of *La Haine*, "This horrible Paris, how I love it!" Permission was given to the Princess to make a tour of the world in 1870, but M. Theirs, who knew her well, gave her to understand that the gates of Paris were open to her.

For many women, Paris is their native air. The moment they leave it they are homesick. It is because Paris excites a fever of the spirit and the heart, like coffee. Out of Paris you find that the clock of time goes too slow. A strange mania to wish to live in the whirlwind! But, after all, it is not wisdom—for philosophers become mad in solitude? Who was it that said, "For lovers the earth revolves in heaven, for others it revolves in the void?" Well, for the provincials of all the provinces of the Old World the earth revolves in *ennui*, while for the Parisians it revolves in the passions, love or wit, pride or money, art or luxury. Oh, Erasmus, where art thou?

Another Parisian, *par excellence*, is his Excellency Commander Nigra. He says, like Marshal MacMahon, "*j'y suis, j'y resterai.*" "I am here, I shall stay here." He was greatly amused at *La Haine*, in learning from the historian Sardou the history of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Nigra is a serious historian, besides being a poet and a satirist. *La Haine* is destitute of gayety. It is the privilege of the *Gaieté* to play nothing but sad pieces. If they could have sprinkled in it a few of the witticisms of the Italian Minister, people could have managed to laugh a little. After all, Sardou is greater than the historian, because he invents history. He could answer his critics in the verse of one Arsène Houssaye :

Tu dis que j'invente l'histoire
Mais toi, qu'as-tu donc inventé ?
Ne fais donc pas crier victoire
A ceux de l'Université.

You have learned already by the Transatlantic cable that the play of M. Victorien Sardou is of the school of Shakespeare. He has even aspired to the sacred terrors of Æschylus. He

has, therefore, been obliged to make short work of history. He has hit upon an admirable situation which has hitherto escaped the dramatist and the tragic poet. It is that of a woman who kills her enemy, returns to finish him, and cannot help coming to his assistance when he feebly asks for water. The whole feminine character is there, in its sudden evolution of hate and of love. La Rochefoucauld said, "There is no hate in woman which is not born of love." This fine scene which transported the house, at a critical moment where the play was about to be shipwrecked, was in danger of turning into a farce, because a *gavroche* murmured, "That is droll ; there is Leah giving water to La Fontaine." But the situation was too fine not to gain the enthusiastic applause of the public. Tragedies which fail through a comic word are tragedies made according to rules of the Abbé d'Aubignac. One who does not offend against rules has no tragic genius. Grammar is made for schoolboys. Every gifted man has his own grammar.

You have heard that all Paris is to be seen at

first representations, but this is incorrect. There is little more than the Paris of art and literature. This is by no means the "upper ten thousand." When I was young, Ma'amselle Rachel, who ruled the House of Molière, had me made Director of the French Theatre. I gave there a hundred new plays. I therefore had an opportunity of studying the fanatical habitués of first representations. I soon saw that, with the exception of a score of celebrities and a dozen ladies of society, the house belonged by the nature of things to criticism and its ladies. There were plenty of marriages of the Twenty-first District, from which you must not infer that the women were especially pretty. On the contrary, one could not help asking how those men, whose trade it is to be clever, and who must have passed through the Temple of Taste of Montesquieu, should have chosen companions so ugly. One thinks of the speech of the husband who surprised a languishing lover at the knees of his wife, who was monstrously ugly: "Ah, Monsieur, and to think that you were not obliged to do it."

I do not mean by that that Messieurs the Critics, ordinary and extraordinary, all have monsters in their boxes. I know more than one who hides away there in the shadow, and under a fan, a pretty woman. But, after all, criticism in general does not love beauty, perhaps because it does not love genius, possibly also because it is not handsome itself. But it has its consolations in thinking of Socrates and Xantippe.

At second representations, on the other hand, in all the respectable theatres, you will see a brilliant company. These evenings are a festival of the eyes for the spectators. Great numbers of fashionable women are there, in toilets which contrast strongly with those of the night before, without counting the diamonds which the "traveling companions" of criticism have not. Notwithstanding, at the first evening of *La Haine*, the fashionable people had made an invasion, under the pretext that the piece would only run one night. It will run 300. Beside the Princess Mathilde was the Princess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—(open your almanac). In the

proscenium box opposite reigned in his omnipotence King Offenbach, surrounded by his family and friends. The Imperial box could not be better filled. Madame Offenbach has the head of an empress. The middle box was occupied by another celebrity, partly American, partly French, partly Italian, the granddaughter of Lucien Bonaparte, by turns Princess of Solms and citizen Rattazzi, now the loveliest widow of the two worlds, dazzling with wit and diamonds. She had with her a young bride, Madame de Molinari, who has just married the editor-in-chief of the *Débats*.

Comedy of comedies, all is comedy, more or less serious. M. Jules Simon was telling this evening at M. Theirs' how Lord Ripon has passed, with arms and baggage, over to the enemy. The enemy is the Church, according to M. Jules Simon, but he was delighted to see the heir-apparent of the Crown of Great Britain, the Prince of Wales, to call him by his name, accepting the position of Grand Master of Freemasons in Great Britain. When we make a step in advance, it is well also to make a step in

in the rear. M. Jules Simon does not love the Church. I remember, at the funeral of the gallant Henri Regnault, that ray of sunshine which has survived death, when they were taking up a collection in the Church of St. Augustine, M. Jules Simon, who was then minister, believing that it was for the poor, took out a five-franc piece, but when he heard the sexton, a man with a mustache like a drum-major, crying in a deep base voice, "for the expenses of the Church, if you please," he carefully put his five-franc piece in his pocket, although it bore the effigy of Napoleon the Third.

There has been, these last few days, a battle of courtesy between Madame Jules Simon and Madame Rattazzi. These two ladies, both more or less worldly, or more or less blue-stocking, received on Thursdays. Now as they receive very nearly the same people, and as they live three miles apart, the one at her dear fifth story in the Place de la Madeleine, the other in the magnificent Hotel of the Duke of Aquila, Avenue de l'Impératrice, they placed their guests on the rack, because they could not dine twice, even

if dinner was served in the first house at seven and in the second at nine. Madame Rattazzi has, therefore, surrendered. It is on Sundays hereafter that all parties will dine with her—M. Ordinaire beside M. Carolus Duran, M. de Lacretelle beside M. de Bonaparte. Madame Rattazzi is like that Senator of the Empire who said, "I not only understand all opinions, but I share them."

It is the most hospitable house in Paris. Scotch hospitality is surpassed forever. For instance, Madame Rattazzi invites twelve persons to dinner, and fifty come. This is no fable. Even to-day she swore to me that we would be twelve. We were forty-nine. In such circumstances you dine as you can. The mistress of the house is greatly the superior of the widow of Scarron, who substituted a story for the roast. The pretty Princess performs every Sunday the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. There are many people in Paris who give excellent dinners where nothing is lacking except guests. The true triumph is to give a bad dinner where there are always four times as many

guests as are expected. I ought to say, by the way, that there are many gourmands in Paris, who dine nowhere so well as at the Hotel Rattazzi.

Paris this winter becomes again the city of social dissipation. They have reconstituted an official circle which throws open its salons generously enough. There are pleasant receptions at Marshal MacMahon's and at the Duke Decazes', while the other ministers are taking their time to become worldly ; more intimate receptions at the house of the Princess Mathilde and the Princess Troubetzkoi. These people of esprit, take the lead. It must be confessed that there are at present some politicians who are men of esprit, like the Duke Decazes just named. M. Emile de Girardin receives also, but it is just his bad luck that while he would prefer politicians, he has none but clever people, proving the wisdom of the nations expressed in the proverb that no one here below is content with his lot.

VENUS FROM ASTRONOMICAL AND
SOCIAL POINTS OF VIEW.

THE GODS OF OLYMPUS IN DRESS COATS—A
MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES WHO
WANTED TO BRING VENUS TO TERMS—AMER-
ICAN WOMEN REPRESENTING THE CLASSICAL
STYLE OF BEAUTY.

PARIS, Dec. 14, 1874.

ARIS has come back to its masked
balls. There is no Carnival with-
out its more or less Comic Opera Balls,
and there would be no Paris without Carnival.
All the festivities come at once. Yesterday I
went to a sword festival, where I applauded the
fencing of Ezpeleta Potocki, Alphonse de
Aldama, and Merignac. In France the sword
finishes every education; it should be made a
part of the compulsory course. They have
seized *Les Diaboliques*, a volume in which
d'Aurévilly has shown an infernal wit. I think
the judge must have desired to assume the

celebrity of this original genius. But all these trifles fade away before the lustre of Venus.

The Transit of Venus is our sole preoccupation for the last three days. You know at Paris the most important events have only a week of echo, whether it be the death of a guillotined king, or the leg of a dancer. In three or four days, therefore, Venus will have had her share of attention. Perhaps there will remain some trace of her passage somewhere else than in the archives of science. Who knows but the boys will say, "Hast thou seen Venus?" as they now say "*Et ta Sœur?*" For there are now two dictionaries of the Academy, the one which is always commencing and never finished under the Dome of the Institute, and that which is improvised in cafes and greenrooms. You are of course familiar with our dictionary of the *langue verte* of which Roqueplan, Théophile Gautier and Henry Murger have given such picturesque examples. While the savants of the world were scouring the universe to observe the wanton planet with their spectacles, we, who stayed in Paris, have seen Venus pass by. We find the gods of Olympus

every day in dress coats, even while we burlesque them in the theatre to the music of Offenbach.

The poet was right in exclaiming :

Gods of Great Homer ! Oh my gods revered !
The new wit jeers you in your starry places :
But soon the day will come when you, in wrath,
Will rise and smite us with your awful hands,
With stern and heavenly vengeance to recall
The wandering spirits careless of your fame,
Who comprehend not that your chastening power
Survives the sacred altars overthrown.
For nothing dies, and even death has life ;
One day they will return in shining forms
These fair ambassadors of the Infinite ;
And when they come, the rosy-finger'd dawn
Will show the nothingness of churlish Science
Feigning void heavens above a lawless world.

But if Olympus is at Paris, it is only represented as yet by Venus. You meet her everywhere, not generally accompanied, as of old, by Master Cupid, but dangling at her skirts a little negro groom, who serves as her advertisement in the peristyle of the theatre or on the seat of her victoria. But this is only her pastime. The great comedy of science has been played, as you know, at every luminous point of the globe.

Venus has made her transit radiantly, which has permitted the advancement by one step of the science of the stars. A hundred years ago this capricious goddess played a saucy trick upon the travellers who set out to see her divine nudity. Not being in a good-humor, she enveloped herself that day in a cloudy dressing-gown, and the inquisitive savants could only pack their baggage and come back. Among them, however, there was an obstinate member of the Academy of Sciences at Paris who insisted on bringing her to terms. He stayed ten years in China, but never succeeded in overcoming her royal wilfulness. He certainly deserved a little humanity from her, but never received it. He came back to Paris, so absolutely forgotten that nobody recognized him, especially not the one who had taken his chair at the Academy and the one who had become his heir. The indignant savant brought suit against both of them, but could not find an advocate to assume his cause. Nobody like ghosts. It was probably in relation to him that the proverb was altered, "the absent are always wrong—to come back." The poor man

died of grief in the time of the revolution. If he had lived a little longer the guillotine might have proved to him, as to Lavoisier, to the son of Buffon, and to André Chenier, that science has no chance against the equality of the scaffold.

But this time Venus showed herself without clouds, and new calculations are to be made in regard to the celestial routes. I spoke just now of the great comedy for this reason : A celebrated astronomer of Paris, a star of science, who has discovered more than one star of heaven has said to me in strict confidence, " Here is a sealed package ; when our distinguished travellers have returned with their innumerable discoveries, I shall communicate to the Academy of Science the same facts, which I have discovered to-day, toasting my toes by my own fireside, safe from the wind and rain."

This is grave, for it weakens the significance of astronomy instead of strengthening it. I remember one day at an exhibition in Touraine where the celebrated Babinet was President of the Section of Sciences, and I was President of that of Fine Arts, we discussed, before the Bishop of

the diocese, the miracle of Joshua. I took the side of the ecclesiastic against the man of science for the amusement I found in the fury of this worthy man. At last he said, "After all, you are perhaps right. A hundred years hence there may come a spirit enamored of novelty who will prove that the sun is not fixed in the midst of the planets, and this innovator may become as famous as Galileo. We who study the heavens are doing injustice to our fame in not looking for noon at fourteen o'clock."

However, until Babinet's prediction is realized, we can still say the sun rises and sets. But to return to Venus.

For philosophers, lovers, and artists, Venus will always be the most majestic symbol of plastic beauty. The Christian religion created the Byzantine beauty, the seraphic, which appeals only to the sentiment; but the Renaissance brought us back to the ancient worship. To be beautiful now-a-days, it is requisite to have, like Venus, perfection of lines and dazzling color. We have at Paris—do you doubt it Madame?—scarcely anything but American women to repre-

sent that Olympian style of beauty. This question was agitated yesterday at a dinner given by the Countess of Juvisy, where were present M. Emile de Girardin, the Princess of Bourbon, Count Potocki and the Countess Potocki, Albéric Second, and the Marquise de St. Phal, a beautiful American, Mrs. de Forest, the neo-Greek Henry Houssaye, the painter Cabanel, and the historian St. Victor. It was proclaimed that the first of nations for the production of beautiful women, according to the Greek rite, was America.

American women come a great deal to France, not because they are more admired there than at home, but because Paris is a temperate country where beauty lasts always, while in New York, where there is neither Spring nor Autumn, beauty suffers from the violence of a changeable climate. To-day, at the Bois, our conversation of yesterday at the Countess Juvisy's received full justification. I saw there, at the last races of the season, the beautiful and spirituelle Miss Robinson, whose charming little pictures might be signed by Chaplin ; and in the same *défilé* beside

the lake, your other countrywomen, Lady Randolph Churchill ; Mrs. Howe ; Mrs. Cutting, just returned from America ; the Downing family, illustrated by two pretty young girls in a charming carriage ; Miss Seligman and her mother ; and the Post family, always faithful to the Bois. They are in deep mourning, but the Bois is in mourning in Autumn. There was also Mr. Sutherland of Nevada, in a yellow-wheeled coach, which makes much ado, I will not say about nothing ; and Mr. and Mrs. Huston in a high coupé which seems to turn up its nose at low ones (they left San Francisco six years ago to visit Paris, and are thoroughly visiting it still) ; Mr. and Mrs. Harriman, who are acclimated in Paris, their pretty black ponies being well known in the Avenue Joséphine. My victoria crossed in front of that of Mr. Barréda, who also likes black horses, when they are English. Mr. Barréda and Madame Cortes, who are both Peruvians, must have plenty of silver mines down there to supply so much gold here. And there goes the hansom of another young American, already famous, for if one of its wheels is called

the Wheel of Fortune, the other may be called the Wheel of Ruin.

We have made an Academician, M. Léon Say, and we have lost one, M. Husson, in the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. M. Léon Say is well known to you as a politician and a journalist. M. Husson was Director of Public Charities. Do you know what that is? It is a grand administration for the support of which everybody is put under contribution. They tell me it is for the poor, but I say it is for the poor administrators.



PARISIAN GOSSIP ABOUT COUNT VON ARNIM AND
NEWSPAPERS—ACTRESSES AND DUCHESES—
DEATH OF CHARLES COLIGNY.

PARIS, Dec. 21, 1874.



ALL the wits of Paris have said their word in regard to Count von Arnim, who was himself a wit, and nothing more. He was for a moment as celebrated as if he had committed a murder and been defended by Maitre Lachaud. He only needs a knotted cord in his prison to make as much noise as Marshal Bazaine. Two memorable treasons ; I say treasons, for they both betrayed themselves. A man cannot serve two masters at once, and Marshal Bazaine and M. von Arnim tried to serve their country and their ambition, especially the latter. For this reason they have been personally fustigated by public opinion.

This proves how journalism has supplanted

diplomacy. This trial taught us nothing which we did not know before, because on every subject in the four quarters of the world, the newspaper opens its hand, full of truths. This was the opinion yesterday of the Princess Trobetskoi, the Duke de Gramont, and the Vicomte de la Guéronnière, who were dining with Emile de Girardin. I suppose when M. de Girardin comes to power he will suppress all the futile mysteries of diplomacy. You know that M. de Girardin believes he has the gift of resuscitating dead newspapers. He accomplished this miracle with *La Liberté*, whose 20 subscribers he bought for 20,000 francs (\$4000). In a few days he printed 20,000 copies. But you cannot perform miracles every day. He has paid \$40,000 for the 200 subscribers of *La France*. How many has he to-day? Yet he is still the same sprightly wit and energetic spirit. But this time he has made himself the advocate of a bad cause—because it is the good cause. You know that in France, if you wish success, you must only defend desperate causes.

The Ambassador of Germany was anxious to

know whether people would come to him more or less after all the scandal of Count von Arnim. At the last reception he had the official and the foreign society, but with the exception of M. Thiers and M. de Broglie, two great ministers without portfolios, there was not a Frenchman nor a Frenchwoman. Madame de Rothschild made no mistake in the door.

Although I wish to write nothing but worldly gossip, I should find myself talking politics unless I took care. You have a correspondent here who has a hundred eyes to see everything and a skilful pen to say everything. He judges from a higher point of view, not being blinded by our passions. I leave him to speak, therefore, of the great affairs of the old world. But he will permit me to mention politicians when I find them on the woman's side. A fete, which was not political, was given yesterday by Madame Rattazzi, in the little palace of the Duke of Aquila, avenue de l'Impératrice. People have not ceased to call the avenue by this name. The old baptism effaces the subsequent ones. It is time to have done with these changes of name which prevent

provincials from finding their way in Paris. It is about as if you should change the names in history. To be logical, you ought to call the Commentaries of Cæsar the Commentaries of Brutus.

Madame Rattazzi gave for the benefit of the poor an amusing performance, with Mlle. Virginie Dejazet, Mlle. Favart, Mlle. Rousseil, and the ladies of quality who wish to remain anonymous—among others the Marquise de Pepoli. One day when Mlle. Rachel found herself socially at the house of the Countess Castellane, she was asked by the Marquise de Fénélon to pass out first from the salon to the dining-room. Mlle. Rachel bowed and refused.

“Let me insist, Mademoiselle Rachel, you are such a great actress.”

“After you, Madame la Marquise,” responded Mlle. Rachel, with her fine smile.

She was right, for fashionable women always play comedy well. The reason is simple enough. The actresses nearly all go to the Conservatoire, which is a bad school; while the fashionable women go to the school of society from their earliest years. It is there they learn

the art of the fan, the art of lying, of talking without saying anything, of speaking so as to disguise their thoughts, of blushing and weeping, and of laughing to mask the heart. For everything is conventional in the world; the more a woman becomes unnatural, the better bred woman she is. It is not surprising, therefore, that the women of society played so well yesterday at the Theatre Rattazzi, where they gave "Bertha's Piano," "Not Loving Too Much is Loving Too Little," and "Horace and Lydia." It is known that the lady of the house has twenty times played this antique gem of Ponsard with Ponsard himself. She was always charming in it. She wears the peplum and repeats the amorous verses with all the grace of the Lesbian women. As a contrast, Mlle. Rousseil declaimed some heroic lines with all the energy of a superb beauty. She is at present the stage idol of Paris. Since she has been playing the *Idole* at the Arts' Theatre, all the managers are on their knees to her, except the manager of the *Français*, who is on his knees to Mlle. Croisette. Mlle. Rousseil just now told me that she was to make

a visit to America next year. Since Mlle. Rachel you have seen nothing like it. She has dramatic genius in the highest degree. If she played with a fan, she would break ten every evening. But she can run the gamut of sentiment with all the science of the woman and the artist.

“Where have you learned all this?” “In my heart.” Besides, the theatre is a school of manners—for actresses.

There was plenty of *beau monde* at this soiree. Gen. Turr, the Prince Galitzin, M. de Rothschild, Lord Sunderland, Louis Blanc, Count Bouillé, Gen. du Barail, the historian of Alcibiades, Angel de Miranda, the Duke de Frias, Gen. Wolff, Gustave da Molinari, Major Rattazzi, Octave Feuillet, Clesinger, Gen. Blanchard, a whole brigade of pretty women, Italian Marchionesses, Spanish Duchesses, English and American ladies, and some Parisiennes.

Paris lost yesterday a night-walker who has left no fellow. He was a friend of mine, and his name was Charles Coligny. He was buried with some display, at night, for it is dark at 5 o'clock,

I was, therefore, not altogether lucid in my eloquence, speaking over his remains. I had given a tomb to Gérard de Nerval ; I gave the same one to Charles Coligny, not through economy, as a retired shopkeeper might think, but because there was more than one point of resemblance between these two poets. Both of them thought that gas had advantageously replaced the sun. They therefore went to bed in the morning and got up at night. They came together one evening. Gérard on the point of putting an end to his life, Coligny still believing in his dreams, but not having twenty-four sous between them. Do not suppose that the money question had any consequence for them ; they were the sort of men to whom every one extends a Scottish hospitality. They were free spirits who cared nothing for the pomps and vanities of this world. They only believed in the passing hour. In reality they were wise because they lived as they pleased. No one could regulate either of them. I had given to Gérard de Nerval a little pavilion in my old Beaujon hotel. He could have lived there, among books, in a garden full of vines,

having only a step to walk to breakfast and dine with me. But he would not stay a fortnight in the pavilion because he was compelled to rise in the morning and go to bed at night. That was not his affair at all. But those who do not give their reason the benefit of the sunlight, always end badly. Gérard de Nerval hanged himself in the *Rue de la Vielle Lanterne*, and Coligny has just died with a waist like a barrel, gained, as he said, by "effacing" some 50 glasses of beer nightly. His evening began at six and ended at daylight. Before devoting himself to beer he had made a prelude, like your Edgar Poe, and our Alfred de Musset, with absinthe and *sacré-chien*. Charles Coligny, though not comparable to these great geniuses, was no ordinary man. He disdained to join the Society of Men of Letters, and perhaps would have refused to join the Academy for the same reason,—that he would have been forced to associate with men who were not his equals, as grammarians. His pride was Castilian, and he draped himself in his misery like a grandee of Spain. He was once very handsome, with his black curls, his large eyes, brilliant and

gentle, his mouth equally well cut for smiling and sneering. He resembled Molière, though not in comic genius, for he could not invent a dialogue. He had no imagination. He was a paraphraser, whatever his subject. He had an odd vanity of his own. At night, when he wandered through Paris with his friends, the night walkers, he frightened the passers by and waked the sleepers with the cry, which has become famous, "Oh hé! Bourgeois of Paris! Hide your wives! Charles Coligny is passing!" If he does not live, it is not for want of style or wit in his work, but because he lacked creative imagination. His prose will be "effaced" like the pots of beer he drank, but something of him will remain in his sonnets.



THE CARNIVAL IN FULL BLAST—THE NEW OPERA
HOUSE MAN ON LESCAUT AND MADEMOI-
SELLE BERNHARDT—AN INVASION OF GYPSIES.

PARIS, Dec. 28, 1874.



CHATELAINE of the middle ages, who was giving edifying lessons in the catechism to her page, suddenly asked him one day, "How many capital sins have we?" "Four," answered the page, unhesitatingly. The lady gave the boy a box on the ear, saying, "Learn, Sir, that seven are none too many for us." In these Carnival times I think there is an Eighth Capital Sin which includes all the others, at least in Paris—and that is Woman; though some flatterer has already said that "woman is the fourth theological virtue.

The Carnival has begun its follies all along the line. Every one wants to prove that the Septennate does not mean ennui. The balls of the comic opera have stolen away the *habitués* of

the Grand Opera balls. Metra's violin conducts all the jollities to the air of the Waltz of the Roses, amid the smiles of men and the laughter of women. One would think that Santa Claus had put back Alsace and Lorraine in our stockings. This gives me an idea which you perhaps may communicate to M. de Villemessant. You know he wanted to give as a premium to the subscribers of the *Figaro* a card of admission to the opera. Why did not he, who seems omnipotent, offer Alsace and Lorraine as a premium? That would have been a great attraction, and when everybody had rushed to the office to subscribe, he could have given them the two provinces, in chromo or bon-bons.

We are only beginners in journalism. If we look in your direction we see ourselves immeasurably surpassed at once. We crawl along in the rear of the newspapers before the flood. We give the news of yesterday, and you give the news of to-morrow. M. de Villemessant understands better than any one among us, journalism as it ought to be, though he confesses he is not yet satisfied with the *Figaro*. But he proves,

with his 80,000 subscribers, that he knows how to manage his public. His personality, besides, is very useful to his paper. In France, the director of a journal should be as much before the public as an actor in the theatre. His face and character must be generally familiar. M. de Villemessant passes for a lucky man, and a man of wit. Lucky he has been at every game of life except *trente et quarante* and baccarat ; witty he always is. Yesterday, in the green-room of the Theatre Français, Mlle. Favart ran up to him. "M. de Villemessant ! How can you permit such calumnies ? Your *Figaro* says I am 40 years old." "Well," answered Villemessant gayly, "kiss me as many times as that estimates slanders you." Mlle. Favart threw herself on the neck of M. de Villemessant and kissed him ten times, distributing the favors equally on his two cheeks. "Very well," said M. de Villemessant, "hereafter the *Figaro* will tell the truth, and instead of 40 years, will give you 50." And all the actors in the green-room stood laughing about the burly journalist and the great coquette.

The *Gaulois* follows the *Figaro* closely in

public curiosity, but the personality of M. Edmond Tarbé is not so demonstrative as that of M. de Villemessant. It was feared for a moment that the editor of the *Gaulois* would leave his journal, but he has gone back to it more valiant than ever. M. Edmond Tarbé is too fond of pseudonyms. He uses all sorts of masks in his writing. Six months ago, under the signature of Jacques Lefevre, he published a series of Parisian stories, founded on fact, of a startling brutality. The time for prudery is past; one must be bold in his drawing to strike the imagination. The modern world must be painted as it is, without conventional trimming. The old style is out of date; three-quarters of the old romancers no longer set on the scene anything but phantoms. In fact, it has always been a failing of the Parisian scribblers to study romances rather than the volume of human life. But to imitate Homer it is not enough to imitate the *Illiad*.

We have in Paris novelists by the dozen who live in their studies and get their passions out of their book-cases. It is not thus that the great

master, the Abbé Prévost, painted the human heart. *Manon Lescaut* is a masterpiece, simply because it is romance which has been lived. The Abbé Prévost is none other than Des Grieux. In the Eighteenth Century the Abbés lived in Paris as they now live in Rome. They were amiable pagans, who did not waste their days in church ; they are represented rubicund and round, with merry eyes and pursed-up lips. They saved their souls in their own way, going to the Court and the Opera. They disguised themselves and went in search of adventures. They said their prayers after supper. They did not share the righteous indignation of Bossuet, but thought that everything was the best in the best of worlds. The Abbé Prévost himself said, "I shall never make a romance so impossible as my own life." And, in fact, what an incredibly romantic and poetic figure is his. Three times a Jesuit, twice a soldier, in turn an exile and an outlaw, but always a lover whether in Holland or England or France, inhabiting a cell of the cloister, or haunting the cabarets of Paris. This was how he became the novelist of the human heart. I

once said in the preface of a new edition, "the passion of the Abbé Prévost for his heroine has made Manon Lescaut the missal of lovers; his art of story-telling has made it the breviary of romancers." Alexander Dumas II., recently writing, also, a preface of this immortal book said, "Manon Lescaut is the prayer-book of courtesans."

Well! I think that both of us were making phrases, in our two prefaces. Courtesans do not read Manon Lescaut much, and those who do read it, do not seek in it the art of loosing their lives while beguiling men. Woman has not passed in vain under the tree of knowledge. Whatever she may be, coquette or *ingénue*, she can still teach all the romancers their business.

They will tell you at New York that the Grand Opera at Paris is about to open. Don't you believe a word of it. There is no Grand Opera at Paris. What matters the monument, if the soul is lacking? The revolution of 1870 finished the French Opera, which was already very sick, as well as the Italian. The operetta then got the

upper hand. Offenbach has dethroned the last of the demi-gods. To reconstruct a veritable French opera they say, little is wanting, except singers and dancers, chorus, scenery, and orchestry. We have nothing of all these. We have one singer, M. Faure. But he is a sacerdotal comedian of an exasperating perfection. A witty woman has said, "He is perfect, but everything perfect is tiresome to me, even perfect love." We have no longer, therefore, the Grand Opera of Paris, but the Grand Opera of the provinces.

While awaiting the opening, the Parisians have gone in procession to witness the work of Charles Garnier. It is a fury of ornament, a mania of gilding. Charles Garnier is an artist of great talent, but he does not possess the French genius. One might say to him what was said to the ancient sculptor who had gilded his statue: "Not being able to make it beautiful, you have made it rich." There are, nevertheless, some very successful things about the building. The thin *foyer*, for instance, with its ceilings by Baudry, has the dazzling aspect of the Moorish and Ve-

netian monuments. The paintings of Baudry are the most beautiful feature of the Opera. Garnier insisted upon Baudry, and in this he was fortunate.

I came out of the Opera without having been able for one moment to rest my eyes, dazzled with gilding. M. Charles Garnier has not understood that the genius of the architect is in the contrast of simplicity and ornamentation, of the beautiful and the pretty. He has tried to be eloquent from the threshold of the peristyle to the vault of the auditorium. There was no silence for the spirit. One thought of a writer who should run himself out of breath, without using any periods or commas. I went at last to repose my eyes, fevered with gold, at the Théâtre Français. There was true luxury ; much grandeur and much simplicity. I arrived at the moment when *Phèdre* was dying for the hundred thousandth time ; that evening in the form of Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt. Since Rachel, this is the first actress who has the temperament of that great antique lover. She has, therefore, gained a triumph. She had spent so much passion in two hours of tragedy that when

she returned, dragged in by Hippolyte, there was nothing left of her but soul. So that the papers next day began anew their pleasantries in regard to this impalpable body. The legend of Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt must have crossed the sea. You doubtless know how the wits vie with each other in describing her leanness. One says she can walk in the rain without an umbrella because she can pass between the drops. Another replies that this is an exaggeration, but he adds that one evening, when some one tried to run away with her, she escaped by hiding behind her riding whip.

Have you heard of the Zigeuners, those Hungarian musicians who are now disturbing Paris? They have the *diable au corps* and pandemonium in their fiddles: wild rhythms, frenzied and plunging harmonies, strange and passionate inspirations, military music, amorous trills, picturesque waltzes and quadrilles, to split your ears. It recalls those etchings where Callot depicts the marches and halts of gypsies. Their cloaks are ragged, but superbly draped. By force of civilization art perishes, like society. It must be re-

freshed once in a while by a return to barbarism. On nearer view these Zigeuners are charming. This evening the celebrated Gen. Turr, who has still remained Hungarian in spite of his Italian glories, served them to us at dinner, not exactly as a new dish, for the gypsies were in the adjoining room. The party, at which there were representatives of all circles, was pitched in a high key, for the Zigeuner music had somewhat bedevilled us. The guests were not content with being witty, but danced also as if they were still at court, at the *petits Lundis* of the Empress, so gayly that the moralist could not have said, "Those dancers sketch with their feet the portrait of their folly."

If I had the right to talk politics, I would say that the Chief of State has gone hunting, and might finish all my letters in the same way. Happy people, we have gone back to the Golden Age.

NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES—THE QUEEN OF SPAIN
AND HER PARISIAN PALACE—DEATHS AND
DANCERS—POLITICIANS ON ICE.

PARIS, January 3, 1875.



IC JACET 1874. Happy the people who have no history, says the philosopher. I do not know whether the year 1874 has made the happiness of nations, but it certainly has no history.

It has, however, finished by a great event in old Europe. Spain, which is fond of stage effects, has played the fifth act of her last comedy. All the neighboring powers, who witnessed the spectacle, applauded its close. The leading actors were called before the curtain. Alfonso XII., who left Madrid a child, returns a man. Perhaps the Spaniards in exiling him had really only one idea—to force him to learn his lessons well. The Emperor Napoleon III. said laughingly, “I knew nothing when I went to

the University of Ham ; the prison was my best tutor." The Prince of Asturias might say the same of his exile. The ready-made politicians say that Spain, like France, is not yet ripe for the Republic. The truth is, it is much too ripe.

If I speak to you of the New Year's gift of Alfonso XII., it is because I was at the Hotel Basilewski when this *coup* was announced. It was a sunstroke. You know how tumultuous is Spanish joy—cries, tears, bursts of laughter, the whole orchestra of gayety. People looked at each other embraced and looked again. It was no dream ; there was another King in Europe, and this King a simple school-boy home for a holiday. A child who was there cried out, "He is lucky, the Prince ; he doesn't have to go back to school."

Will Queen Isabel now go to Spain? Or will she continue to hold her hospitable court at the Hotel Basilewski, where, indeed, she had her courtiers as at Madrid, courtiers of the past and of the future? For more than one Spaniard saw on the horizon the rising sun of the Prince of Asturias. Queen Isabel took no care of politics, saying that politics would take care of

themselves, and that all the great events which make the world's history are written on high. While awaiting other destinies the Queen contented herself with witty conversation, well-ordered charities, and well-written letters. She writes in French as in Spanish with easy grace, though she will now probably give up the language of exile to a great extent, even if she remains in Paris.

While the Republic was falling in Spain, Ledru-Rollin was falling in Paris. He was a man of heart and a man of wit, devoted to art and to letters. I knew him in 1832, not exactly in society, but in the street. We were two insurgents of June ; I a student in rebellion, and he already an advocate of rebellion. This brave gentleman, who was represented as a sort of ogre to little children, went through life with a gentle face and smiling lips. In his youth he dressed like Count D'Orsay. If all the Republicans had been of his school, they might to-day give the country gentlemen lessons in manners. There are, however, radicals here and there of the same good kind. M. Ordinaire, for instance,

goes to parties in three-button gloves. Ledru-Rollin left a fortune, of which he did not know the amount. Among his heirs is a brother-in-law of mine, a prominent banker, and he is also ignorant of the value of the estate, which consists of a little corner of Paris, the value of which varies according to events. We may say that M. Ledru-Rollin sacrificed his fortune to his opinions, for under the Republic Parisian real estate loses 25 if not 50 per cent.

All parties follow the road of death. Yesterday, at St. Philippe du Roule, the *dies iræ* resounded over the remains of Mademoiselle Marie Chevreau, daughter of M. Léon Chevreau. There were present all the stars, I might say all the tears, of the Bonapartist party; M. Rouher, M. Haussman, the Duke de Mouchy, Marshal Canrobert, M. Joachim Murat. She was a charming young girl, in all the beauty of early youth. Here lie Seventeen Springs. On her tomb might be written this epitaph of the Anthology: "The Dawn, with her rosy fingers, plucked her in the earliest sunlight."

In these first days of January one must be

made of steel, and steel well-tempered, to do one's duty as a Parisian in High Life. For example, I, who am nothing more than a poor slave of the quill, have fifteen invitations to dinner this week—two a day—and everybody dines at the same hour. I began this evening at M. Thiers's, in company with MM. Mignet, Barthélemy St. Hilaire, Emmanuel Arago, Ernest Renan, a few deputies of the *tiers-parti*, members of the French Academy, a princess, and a duchess—the Princess Troubetzkoi and the Duchess Colonna, the one an artist in politics and the other in sculpture, two great ladies, if there are such. The Princess is always sharing in the agitation of events, continually in their flux and reflux; while the Duchess is as grave and calm as marble—though you must understand I mean the marble which has descended from its pedestal. With the Princess Troubetzkoi all the veils of European diplomacy are as nothing; she sees through not merely the acts but the very souls of sovereigns. She loves politics as other women love ribbons. She predicted to me the late revolution in Spain and

another one which is still to come. What I admire in her is that she never flatters power or majesty ; she disputes, face to face, with every form of pride ; she does not wish in discussion to be treated as a woman or a princess ; like St. Simon she loves the truth even against herself. She speaks with passion, but she does not push her prejudices into error, as is so often the habit of those who preach Humanity. She adores M. Thiers, but only on condition that she shall not flatter him. Nothing is more amusing than to see the pair of them beginning a battle of ideas and theories. They fight with courteous though trenchant weapons. When the Princess has exhausted her resources she says to her adversary, "After, all you are only a great historian ;" which means, "You only study men in history while I study them from nature."

Well, those who study men from nature, and those who study them in history, are equally ill informed. For as man is not a reasonable animal, how can he be judged ? He does not even understand himself. When you think you thoroughly understand his character, he escapes

you by some unforeseen caprice. M. Thiers thought he understood MacMahon's character, but here is MacMahon wanting to be Septennial, King by the Sword, Absolute King, in that incredible Republic which only lives by the sufferance of Orleanists, Legitimists, and Bonapartists.

The very day that the Hotel Basilewski was in gala, there was no less festivity at another Hotel Basilewski. Let me explain. Alexandre Basilewski, who represents one of the great fortunes of Russia, came to live in Paris ten years ago, carried away by his taste for Gothic art. He built in the Avenue du Roi de Rome a great mansion, not for himself but for his gallery, very much as I had done ten years before in the Champs Elysées. When the mansion was finished, he could never feel at home in it, because he had there suffered a great sorrow. Just in time the Queen of Spain was exiled. In all Paris there was nothing but the Hotel Basilewski which could recall her lost splendors, by the magnificence of its staircase and the grand fashion of its saloons. It was regal ; so the Queen invested two millions in it, and Basilewski, at that price, was delighted

to be put out of doors. He rented, like a simple mortal, a little house in the Rue Blanche, No. 49. It was less than nothing, but Basilewski acknowledges no obstacles. He built for his incomparable master-pieces a gallery in the garden, where he has placed the rarest of museums under the protection of two or three hundred pigeons who reside there. The house is none the less hospitable for not being large ; and on the day when the Queen of Spain was radiant in the arms of her son, Basilewski had twenty-two of us at dinner to finish and begin the year worthily. There were all the Russians of the official world at Paris, famous antiquarians, and men of letters, renowned for their dexterity with the knife and fork. Albéric Second, Paul de St. Victor, Henry Houssaye, and several others, who are celebrated in two or three wards of Paris, but whom you do not yet know. We dined *à la Russe*, that is to say, twice ; first as a prelude in the drawing-room, and then in the dining-room ; which did not prevent some of us from supping at last in the gallery after some very interesting conversation about arms, faience, miniatures, retables, the

thousand and one relics of the art which starts at the Catacombs to arrive at the Renaissance.

That evening Paris was amusing itself everywhere. I speak of the Paris which does amuse itself. There was a ball at Countess Walewska's, who is still as young as her daughters. The ball was a bouquet of youth: Mesdames de Renneval, de Rothschild, de Reverseaux, de Fontenay, de Regnault St. Jean d'Angély, Leopold Lehon, the Princess Czartoriska. Prince Joachim Murat and Mademoiselle Walewska conducted the cotillion. But before the "German," Waldteuffel, at the stroke of midnight, gave the signal of the New Year. Formerly every one kissed his partner, but now they touch the end of their gloves. This seems very cold—but it is the first of January. The lady of the house gave to each of her guests adorable little memorandum-books, which may one day be romances. If one of them ever comes into my hands, I will let you know.

At the Elysée they are preparing the two official balls, which will be officially tiresome. For you cannot fuse into a dancing party the

society of all parties. The royalists have no objection to dancing over a volcano or *upon* the Republic, but they will not dance with it. There has been a dance on the ice also, but a thaw has cast cold water on the skaters' festival. The Prince de Sagan and the Prince d'Arenberg had made incredible exertions to make the fête a brilliant one. But the gods willed otherwise, especially the god Thor. Nevertheless there was some skating on New Year's. It was remarked that the Orleanists had it all their own way on the ice ; the Count and Countess of Paris, the Duke and Duchess of Chartres, Madame de Pourtalès, the Marquis of Lau, Madame de Montgomery—but the ice melted !

AN APOLOGUE OF M. THIERS—THE OFFENDED FAIRY—THE SPARTAN CLUB—GEN. READ'S ALBUM—AMERICAN BEAUTY IN THE OPERA HOUSE—THE ROYALTY OF FASHION.



THIERS yesterday told me this legend :—When France came into this world as a nation, it was in the time of the fairies. As France was to be a great princess they invited to her cradle all the good fairies ; the fairy of wit, of riches, of conquest, of beauty, of grace, the fairies of harvest and vintage. It was an unparalleled festival throughout the young kingdom ; everywhere they danced and drank. But in the very midst of this public rejoicing an uninvited fairy came to sit at the banquet. There were already a dozen at the table, and the strange visitor made the thirteenth. She was not gay like the others ; on the contrary, her face was full of meditation, gravity, and sadness.

Every one began to say, "What is she doing here, with that unearthly countenance?"

She had sat down, but she rose with majesty and thus spoke: "You invited all the good fairies to the cradle of France, and you forgot me. Woe be unto you! France shall have days of victory and conquest. She shall be rich in corn and wine. She shall be famous for her wit. She shall beguile the world with her grace. But whenever she is about to enjoy her good fortune an unforeseen catastrophe shall hurl her into the abyss of war or of revolution. And thus I shall be avenged." "Who art thou then?" they cried out from every side to the avenging fairy. She was already at the door; she turned on the threshold and said, in a tone at once solemn and satirical, "I am Wisdom! France may have at her cradle all the other good fairies, but as she had not me, all the rest will be useless."

Thus said Wisdom, and Wisdom is always right. To-day also—but I will not talk politics.

M. Thiers is always the wonderful conversationalist whom you know. While the Left Centre revolves around him, continuing in his salons the

discussions of Versailles, he escapes from politics by his wonderful fund of talk which has enchanted the diplomatic and literary world. The Duchess Colonna being there with the Princess Traubetskoi the conversation turned upon sculpture. I wish I could stenograph for you all the just and profound things which M. Thiers said about this great art. He is certainly a man of learning, but he is also above all a man of the moment. At the tribune he is always eloquent ; but as he himself says, in all intellectual and artistic work it is only a question of quarter hours. He is very fond of sketches, because they indicate much more than finished pieces, the sentiment of the artist, and the fire of inspiration. Michael Angelo in his sketches, Rembrandt in his etchings, give a brilliant proof of this truth. They seize upon you because they are alive. You seem to have a share in this first expression of genius ; somewhat as if the Creator had permitted you to assist at the making of the world.

Have you ever heard of the Academy of the Spartans, or rather of the Spartan Dinners ? For

this is an Academy that dines, which gives it a great advantage over the French Academy. It has another advantage ; it is not employed on a Dictionary. It contents itself with being witty—at table. It pronounces no discourses nor funeral orations. It has held its sessions at the *Trois Frères Provençaux*, at the *Petit Moulin Rouge*, at the *Maison d'Or*, and at Brébant's.

Who is Brébant? He is a man of genius whom circumstances have made keeper of a restaurant at the corner of the Boulevard Mont Martre. He has been called "The Restorer of Letters" first because he bears some resemblance to Francis I., and then because his place is always full of literary men. He is a very gentlemanly person, who has become learned by hearing the conversation of journalists who are not. His library is the public. He is always to be seen at First Nights in the theatre, where he makes a very stylish appearance with Madame Brébant, a beauty in full flower, two genuine Parisian figures. The Spartans have made their favorite domicile at Brébant's. This Academy was founded in 1867, in the gay times of the

Empire. Unfortunately it has already lost several members impossible to replace, such as Théophile Gautier, the Duke of Persigny, the Duke of Acquaviva, three original types. It now numbers Paul de St. Victor, a brilliant pen ; Lord Lytton, whom you know as the poet Owen Meredith ; Gen. Read, your Minister in Greece ; Xavier Aubryet, a Rivarol and de Maistre in one ; Cabanel, the painter of Duchesses ; Henry Houssaye, surnamed Alcibiades, probably because he is the living image of Lucius Verus ; Gaston Jollivet, a witty chronicler in verse and prose, a swordsman whose thrusts are like epigrams, and whose epigrams are like stabs ; Arnold Mortier, the *Monsieur de l'Orchestre* of Figaro ; Gen. Schmitt, a brave and clever soldier, who could not prevent Gen. Trochu from talking instead of acting ; Paul Baudry, one of the four great painters of the nineteenth century ; Ziem, the Venetian who grinds sunshine on his palette ; a novelist, M. du Boisgobey ; a publicist and historian, M. Valfrey ; Paul Lacroix, the celebrated Bibliophile Jacob ; Edmond de Goncourt, the historian of art ; Dupray, the painter of

battles. I must pass over some of the best. They have elected me—I cannot imagine why—President of this Academy, which is by no means a sinecure, because this is an Academy which dines.

At the last sitting I proposed a toast—in very good champagne—to Gen. Read, who was just starting for Greece. He had brought a book of blank pages, and said to us, “This book will be mine, when each of you has inscribed a thought in it.” I don’t know whether we were especially witty that day, but I copy some things which fell from our pen.

There is no such thing as Liberty, for no man is free if he is the slave of his conscience

All loves—even maternal love—have their anguish and their griefs. God has made a pain for every pleasure; the gate of Paradise opens into hell,

A note from a woman, no matter how tender, is a sight draft on you; you must always pay in some coin or other.

Marriage begins with one of the seven sacraments; it ends with one of the seven mortal sins.

Thought is like Jeannot's knife. Common men are content to keep it bright for use ; men of genius first change the handle and end by changing the blade.

Sooner or later we pardon our friends the injuries we have done them.

If a borrower comes, lend him your ear.

Women always give more than they promise ; men less.

Love is like liquor ; men say it is killing them but always come back to it.

If you become famous beware of the fools—for they always gather around the people who are stared at.

Gen. Read would not write a conceit like the rest. He had just experienced a profound grief in the loss of his father. This is the thought he has inscribed in the book, which is still at its first page :

Life is the road to death. The Indians say : Death does not kill, it makes us invisible, it is the sorrow of survivors to see no more those whom they loved ; but the first friend we lose gives a clearer vision to the soul. Every step

towards death opens a little wider the gate of eternity.

Paris dances, waltzes and whirls. It dresses and undresses ; it makes itself handsome and ugly ; it laughs or grimaces according to the luck of the evening ; running from the Elysée to the Opera Ball, from the Faubourg St. Germain to the Champs Elysées, chasing gayety until it is out of breath. It is not at the Elysée palace that gayety is found. Harmony has not yet been established in the gay world since 1870. You are sure of meeting there the first prizes in painting, women beautifully colored and enamelled, but society is occupied in hiding and seeking at once ; there is the Orleanist corner, the Legitimist corner, the Septennialist, the Imperialist, and the Radical. There is one place where all get on well together—at the buffet. But how far we are from the fêtes of the good-natured tyrant Napoleon III. Paris is in its full tide of carnival folly. Jean Jacques said that gayety was half the daily bread of Paris. His bread was always black—almost all the bread was black a hundred years ago. Now everybody's bread is white, but

gayety is no longer half the daily bread of Paris. The opera continues thronged. Women of every circle would like to have it the fashionable salon, but they do not venture into the foyer, which is the only room that is really habitable. It is a pity; for they would be better judged there in their grace, their attitude, their freedom of movement. A woman seated shows only half her beauty, whatever be the charm of her face. For this reason the amateurs of art, who say that women are worth more than statutes, never fail to be on the grand staircase when the ladies descend. The day before yesterday the great success belonged to six young Americans who occupied the *entre-colonne* opposite the notorious Madame Musard, herself an American constellated with diamonds. There was never seen in one box such a bouquet of young girls, so pretty in the aureole of their twenty years. There were blondes and brunettes, laughing and sentimental, coquettish and ingenuous, all with those American eyes which outvie the most precious stones. It was a battle of beauty. One would have said they were there to defy the women of France, and

vanquish them on their own chosen field. There was danger that the new building would take fire like the old. If it had, it could have been rebuilt twice as fine with half the money.

The Faubourg St. Germain amuses itself, playing with King's cakes, an innocent game. Several Duchesses of the parish of Ste. Clothilde, the Duchess Pozzo di Borgo among others, have used this social pastime for a royalist demonstration, shouting *Vive le Roi!* over the confectionery. The Countess de Beaufort, the Countess of Montesquieu, the Countess of Juvisy shared in this harmless fanaticism. But the true royalty in Paris is fashion. A ball dress is a monumental work. No man with less than a hundred thousand francs of income can permit his wife to go into society, dragging those skirts with draperies of damasked gauze shot with gold and silver, and all abloom with garlands. Do you know the cost of one of those trains of Louis XIII. brocade with agraffes of brilliants? A thousand dollars would be nothing for it.

What would Adam say to this—he who dressed his wife with a fig-leaf?

STORMY WEATHER — PARISIAN PRECOCITY — THE
SALON OF A PRINCESS—THE GRAVE OF A GREAT
ARTIST.



PARIS, January 17, 1875,
WILL commence, if you please,
with a line of Victor Hugo :

“Madame, the wind blows ; I have killed
three wolves.”

In these tempestuous days which are beating upon Versailles, at the very hour of our political crisis, this is what Marshal MacMahon might say. To drive from his mind the fact that he is surrounded by a mere shadow of government, he goes hunting, precisely like Louis XVI. in the great days of the Revolution.

France, which has counted more than a hundred parties and more than fifty governments since 1789, could easily accustom herself to none at all. During the two weeks in which we have had only the phantom of a ministry, Paris has been gayer than ever. We dine, we sup, we dance, we marry, we separate, we marry again

and separate anew. The theatres are crammed ; it requires influence to get a stall. Although the opera has neither men nor women who can sing, although its dancers are cripples, it is taken by storm four times a week. It is the same way with all places of amusement. It would seem as if Paris had lost the faculty of staying at home. We are so perverted by our thirst of curiosity and our gluttony of the forbidden fruit that we no longer care for the fireside—that sweet poetic fireside sacred to the games of childhood. What am I saying? Children no longer play. I have a son ten years of age. He is something of an American, for his mother is a charming woman of Lima. Do you want to know how he amused himself at his last holidays? Listen. Some one said to me, “Do you know that your son drives the prettiest pair of black horses in the Bois?”

I did not believe a word of it, but the next day Madame Alfred Musard, who drives her four-in-hand with the grace of Apollo behind the horses of the Sun, said to me, “I congratulate you. I have just met your son with a cigarette in his mouth driving two spirited horses, like a man.”

I should tell you that I have two sons. If the one belongs somewhat to the New World, the other belongs a good deal to the Ancient World. He is the historian of Apelles and Alcibiades. He has lived much in Greece, and would probably still be there if he had not come back to France to enlist in the army in 1870. This one rides, but does not drive; so that I had no doubt that the one in question was the younger.

I called him before my tribunal.

"What does this mean, sir? They tell me you drive in the Bois two black horses taller than yourself."

"Yes, sir."

"Whose are they?"

"Mine."

"Explain this mystery."

"I bought them dirt cheap—eight thousand francs—and the dealer threw in a basket-carriage as light as a feather."

"And how did you pay for the horses, Monsieur my son?"

"Oh, the dealer knew you. He had sold

horses to you before ; he knows he will get his money some day or other."

Thus do ten-year-olds amuse themselves now-a-days. I sent my son back to the College Henri IV.—on foot.

I told this story to illustrate the state of things in France. Children amuse themselves like men, and men amuse themselves like children.

I return to the tempest. While I am writing these lines the wind is carrying away my chimneys and twisting the trees of my garden. I feel as if I were on the high seas, for just now a Neapolitan princess, on her return from Jerusalem, was recounting to me her horrible passage. It was the Princess Piniatelli of the Bourbon family. She has given two charming princesses to the world, two genuine princesses of the fairy tales. One of them has married the Count Potocki, a hundred times millionaire, my neighbor in the Avenue Friedland ; the other remains unmarried, though not for lack of suitors. She says it is very agreeable to be a marriageable young lady, for those who like comedy. The mother has been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

She adores her daughters, and made this pilgrimage for them. Heaven was for a moment cruel to her, for she suffered a terrible storm. But it was only an hour of trial ; the finest souls are those which are most tried.

You love the sea in America. We do not, here in France : any more than Cato. This censorious person repented of three things : first, of letting a day pass without doing some good ; second, of having confided a secret to a woman ; third, of having gone in a boat when he might have gone by land. Horace was no braver than Cato in face of the waves. He considered seamen as mad as the sea, and would not trust himself in such insane company. Byron, who feared very few things, thought it absurd rashness to defy all four elements at once by going to sea. But if all the world had agreed with these sages and poets, we should not have at the Elysée balls those pretty Americans who give all the charm and brightness they have. We should be reduced to contemplate a few toothless Duchesses, and shopkeepers' wives in their best clothes.

We shall not lack for kings, if we go back to

the monarchy. The Countess of Paris has given birth to a new prince, who is to be called Charles d'Orleans. In the meanwhile his godmother is called the Republic.

The Princess Troubetzkoi gave yesterday a talking party; next Saturday she will give a dancing party. Under the Empire the Princess was a part of all the fêtes of the court. She still continues the court with the Princess Mathilde. In one of the masked balls at the Tuileries she took part in a quadrille of bees. The bee is her emblem. Its sting and its honey are both evident in her talk. Although her salon in the Rue Courcelles is extremely pacific, war is carried on there without her knowledge. For instance, she used to dream of the fusion of the Centres and the fusion of the Princes. Two years ago the Left Centre and the Orleans Princes were in the ascendent. Now the Right Center and the Bonapartists have taken possession. I saw there yesterday the Duke and the Duchess of Gramont, Gen. Fleury, the Count de La Ferriere, Countess Walewska, the Vicomte de La Guernoniere, Marshal Canrobert, Raoul Duval, Duchess Colonna,

Count Sartiges, the Duke d'Abrantes, while the Orleans family was not represented by any of its adherents, nor was the Left Centre ; neither M. Thiers nor M. de Remusat, nor M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire. All the diplomatic body was naturally under arms. But all their orders and decorations paled before the eyes of Madame Barandiaran, the wife of the former Embassy of Maximilian, a beauty who has just dethroned even the lovely Madame de Villeneuve. There was no one wanting except Gen. Schenck, who had just arrived in Paris, and Mr. Washburne, who, like a philosopher, only goes out when he has nothing else to do.

The Academy is about to receive Alexandre Dumas II., who will pronounce the eulogy of Alexandre Dumas I. He said lately: "My father has not gone down to the grave ; he has gone up to it." Hitherto the deceased has not been much talked about. He will go arm in arm with his son into the Academy, and take his seat in the immortal Forty-first arm chair. It is right that justice should be done even in literature, while criticism uses such false scales.

Balzac died crushed by insults ; Diderot would have died of hunger if it had not been for the Empress of Russia ; Moliere died without the right of sepulture.

Alexandre Dumas did not choose his time to die. At his death France was herself near her last gasp, for it was in 1870. So that people scarcely perceived that the great romancer had ceased to live. He has been almost forgotten since then ; he has hardly an epitaph at Villers-Catterets, his birthplace. His pieces are no longer played, his books scarcely read. But his hour will come. It belongs to his son to set forward the clock of his resurrection.

They say that nations pass away in their great men. France is losing hers rapidly. Millet was buried yesterday—that admirable landscape painter who seized Nature in his nervous grasp, and dragged Truth out of her well. It was his desire to sleep in the little graveyard of Barbizon, by the side of his friend Theodore Rousseau. His admirers did not trouble themselves to go to his funeral. A few artists of the Forest of Fontainebleau were all you could see at the

grave. True, it was a miserable day, a genuine landscapists' weather. The wind and the snow raved around the coffin of him who had painted spring time and harvest with a scriptural feeling.

His pictures are priceless but he was always poor. He lived in a house near the Forest furnished like that of a peasant. In fact Millet remained a rustic to the end ; he never acquired the usages of the world. They tried once to make him put on gloves to visit a princess. "No," he said, "that would spoil my hands." He was afraid of losing his simplicity and sincerity of touch. He was reproached for having painted so many barn-yards. "I suppose," he cried, "I ought to paint Nature in her Sunday clothes." He certainly never made his life a holiday, the poor great man ! He lived upon nothing, devoted to his art, which was nevertheless not all his religion, for he always remained true to God and the Church. He never forgot that he had assisted in the celebration of the mass in his childhood. He spoke with pleasure of his red robe and his white tunic. Voltaire

said of the Church with his *Grand Seigneur* impertinence, "The Church is the beggar's Opera." The Church was the only opera of this "beggar" Millet. You could hear him in his studio singing masses, and what he chanted with most fervor was the mass for the dead. He defied the musicians to produce anything comparable to the *Dies iræ*. There were no speeches over the grave of Millet. This was well ; for what could have been said so simple and so grand as his rustic genius. The wind spoke among the trees of the cemetery far more eloquently than any funeral orators could have done before the open grave of that worthy man, who lived only for art and who died in God.

When we have looked over all those scenes of country life by this artist, who has been called the "painter of dunghills," because he so loved to dot the *i*'s in his representations of nature ; when we have breathed in his barn-yards, in the midst of those women, who are not cocottes of the Quartier Bréda disguised as gleaners, but good, honest dairymaids, we find ourselves a little strange in Parisian festivities, and we ask our-

selves while saluting that pretty princess, rippling with diamonds, with a necklace of pearls, trailing a robe of topaze satin and golden gauze, with a dazzling bodice, and clasps of emeralds, a dress which begins, but never ends, we ask where is the truth, where is the woman? Is it the dairymaid or the princess?

It is the dairymaid in the morning, and the princess at night, the eclectics will say.



THE OPERA QUESTION—THE TWILIGHT OF GARNIER—WIT OF WOMEN IN THE DARK—NECROLOGY OF THE WEEK AND DIGESTION OF THE LORD MAYOR.

PARIS, January 24, 1875.



HE opera is still in Paris the great public question. What does the fall of a minister amount to? Since we have ceased to know the name of Ministers, except perhaps of a chief of the Cabinet, we see them coming and going with the most perfect indifference. We know well enough that neither this one nor that one will be the salvation of France. It is the farce before the great drama. But the opera is something altogether different. It is the heart of Paris, it is the salon of those who have none. The great Hetairai here elbow Duchesses. The news of the day, or rather the news of the morrow, is here prepared. The reporters, who as a general thing know no more of what is

going on in the great world than what they find on the menus of dinner parties, are as much at home at the opera as girls of fashion. This is the reason that the opera has caused and still causes so much discussion.

Do not fear that I am going to talk to you of the inauguration, for you know already all about that. Paul de St. Victor attended to that by telegraph. But he probably did not touch one grave question—that of the light. To have a correct idea of it, think of a clouded sky. The women are furious. They say they can only be half seen in this twilight. The flashing of the diamonds is barely perceptible. And yet any other hall would be illuminated sufficiently by the diamonds scattered helter-skelter over the opera. Madame de Cassin exhibits four millions worth ; Madame Musard, five millions ; Madame de Païva, six millions. In the presence of such miracles, Madame de Pourtalès, Madame de Villeneuve, Madame de Bozérián, Madame de Reuneville, Madame de Pèire, the Duchess de Mouchy, and the cluster of Americans are content with the blaze of their own beauty. The Marquise

Anforti, Madame Rattazzi, and Madame Boulewska carry only pearls and bouquets.

But the question of light remains to be solved. A scientific commission has been appointed, but such a question cannot be decided with spectacles. Besides, the savants will consider only the stage, while the house is the thing to consider. All the interest now centres in the audience. There are 30,000,000 French and foreigners who want to see the opera at least once. They care very little whether this one sings well or that one dances badly. The director can continue making his fortune with his provincial troupe. If he had the first performers in the world he could not make more money. I have advised the Minister to replace the commission of savants with a commission of women. In the meanwhile the fair elegantes despair of doing themselves justice at the opera, obscured by such half lights. They revenge themselves on the architect by a thousand witticisms. They say, for example, that he ought to have decorated before and not after, because his decoration is of a better tone than the hall. They say you must pass through

the Chapel of Expiation to get to your box. They say nobody will go there to see the women because it is a curiosity-shop. They say you may see every style there except French style. They say that M. Garnier probably lives in an entresol because everything is *écrasé*. They say they feel as if they were at a café concert, and that people will next be smoking cigarettes in the private boxes. They say that the most appropriate overture would be *Orphée aux Enfers*.

On that opening night all eyes were turned toward the King of Spain. There was some surprise that Marshal MacMahon did not invite him into his proscenium box, for the King of Spain had only a box like a common mortal. I went to chat a little with him about that great spectacle which awaited him in Spain. He had not forgotten that saying of Lamartine, "France must not be bored." He has decided to give the Spaniards a change of spectacles, to avoid further dramatic surprises.

Not far from the opera is the Church of St. Augustin, another monument of Napoleon III. ; but they built the Lord's house faster than the

Devil's. There was a great crowd there yesterday to hear a funeral mass for the dead Emperor. And since we are speaking of mortuary masses, let me mention three men who have recently died and who deserve an epitaph: Emile Péreire, the Duke of Mortemart, and the Count of Liedekerque. Emile de Girardin has well said of M. Péreire that he was a parvenu of labor and not of luck. This great financier would have been great if he had remained a man of science. No one had a greater gift of annihilating space in imagination and in fact. He saw with equal clearness things near and far. I knew him when he was a St. Simonien when he wanted to make over the world again under the dispensation of Enfantin. It was a time when gods were plenty, for the philosopher has said that there are mortal gods as well as immortal. I knew at that time another god named Le Mappah, but Enfantin was more effective because he wore the official costume of the new Olympus. Le Mappah contented himself with a red hat, such as were then worn by medical students. I had very little reverence for him, because one morning going

to make him an unexpected visit I found him in a horrible garret, under the iron rule of a jealous goddess who kept him under lock and key. What can you think of a god who is not permitted to go out except at certain hours? Still, Le Mappah was a handsome and elegant fellow. He died too young for glory.

Emile Péréire was not even a demi-god among the St. Simoniens. He merely studied under the inspiration of Enfantin. In late years I have seen at the Hotel Péréier, Enfantin poor and Péréire a hundred times millionaire. But Enfantin was not in the least abashed by all this. He still held his head high, saying, "Oh! if we had only had these hundred millions when we were preaching at Menilmontant!" Menilmontant was their Olympus. Péréire had perhaps become too rich, but he ought not to be confounded with those adventurers like Mirès, for instance, one of those gluttonous grasshoppers who would have fain have renewed in France the plagues of Egypt. A great financier of the Directory had said, "Business is other people's money." That disgusting little Mirès said in his

turn, "Bad business is other people's money," and every business of his was bad. The God of the Hebrews is just ; Mirès died without a sou.

The Duke of Mortemart had played a part in diplomacy and politics, and so died Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, after having been Peer and Senator. He had retired from the world in a more than princely, a historic residence, the Château de Meillant, which was made illustrious by the beautiful countess of Châteaubriand, the favorite of Francis I. It is a smaller Fontainebleau, built from the designs of Primaticcio. France, after all its revolutions, is still full of these magnificent castles.

Count Liedekerque was killed in the chase. He was greatly beloved in Parisian society, where he would never have been taken for a Belgian but for his name. "That unhappy shot," said Mlle. Fiocre, "will not leave us a huntsman the less ; to-morrow you will see in the newspapers, as usual, 'Marshal MacMahon has gone hunting'." Some one said to Louis XIV. : "Take care, Sire ! you lose almost as many gentlemen in the chase as in the army."

"Never fear," answered the great King ; " God will not forget what I have done for Him."

Spiritualism continues to disturb and to soothe people's minds. The research of the unknown will always be a passion of souls aspiring towards their eternal source. We owe to Mme. Maria d'Alguquerque a curious volume bearing this title: "The Memoirs of two Spirits." There is one objection made to this theory of anterior existence, that we ought to have some recollection of it ; but has not Alexandre Dumas answered this objection? "Does the grub remember the egg? the chrysalis the grub? the butterfly the chrysalis? and completing the circle of metamorphosis, does the egg remember the butterfly? God has not wished to give to man this pride of memory which he has not given to animals. From the moment that man should remember that he existed before he was man, man would be immortal."

But for all that, we have no Ministry. We get on well enough without. Ministers imagine that they govern France. But France guides herself, for she makes the public opinion which

makes and unmakes Ministers. Yesterday an unpublished letter of Voltaire was sold, from which I take these lines : "Force and weakness arrange the world. If there were nothing but force, all men would be fighting ; but God has created weakness to make everything easy on the earth. Thus the world is composed of asses which carry and men who load." Find a Ministry in that !

I had almost forgotten the Lord Mayor, whom we have among us. I fear he will die of indigestion. The papers are full of the dinners in his honor. Unless he dines four times a day he will never get through with them. I imagine his official wig turning white with the labor. Surely Gargantua was not worthy to loose the rosettes of his shoes.

A SOLDIER'S BALL-ROOM TALK—THE ROMANCE
OF A WALTZ—TERPSICHOREAN APHORISMS—
THE HEIGHT OF THE SEASON—A PERSIAN
PARABLE.

PARIS, January 31, 1875.

T the last Elysée ball Marshal MacMahon, Marshal Canrobert and I were chatting over the "volcano of the dance." It was towards midnight, the hour when the Duke of Magenta leaves the little "Salon of Salutations" to walk about among his guests. They were dancing and waltzing with great gayety. The women were making peacocks' tails with their trains, and doing wonders with their faces. It had been a feverish day at Versailles, but nobody had heard of it in Paris. Marshal MacMahon made to us this judicious remark: "See how sensible Paris is ; it ignores what is going on at Versailles. I have no Ministry ; the Assembly is in tumult for a word ;

but all that does not keep Paris from dancing. They dance over a volcano ; but it is a volcano of roses."

The Marshal was right. It would seem as if the great wall of China lay between Paris and Versailles, between Versailles and France. An ancient philosopher said: "The things of this world go of themselves. Men try in vain to swim against the current. The stream bears them away, because the gods have ordered all things." This is fatalism ; but one is tempted to believe in it when one sees in France all parties rushing to the assault to attack nothing at all. It is true, as was said yesterday at Princess Troubetzkoi's, that we were in the Republic. You know that on the 30th of January, of the year of grace 1875, the Republic had a majority of one vote at Versailles : so that everybody was saying that evening, "There is but one voice for the Republic." It is true that day before yesterday the Monarchists and Imperialists had rejected the Republic by 27 votes. So that in France everybody ought to be suited. Friday we had a monarchy ; Saturday, a Republic :

Monday they will cry, *Vive l'Empereur!* and Tuesday, *Vive la Commune!*

But this is nothing but a fever of phrases. Nothing is changed in France ; there is only a Ministry the more or less.

Everything goes on well. At the soiree of the Elysée, Marshal Canrobert, who hides a waggish spirit under his grave aspect, said to us : " There is a great deal of talk about stagnation ; look at these ladies and tell me if they do not show that there is great progress in painting." In fact, there has never been a finer show of color, both among Parisians and foreigners, than at this Elysée ball. There were even a good many enamelled, which is by no means the same thing, for painting the face is a work of art like a picture or a pastel, while enameling consists in injecting a dose of arsenic in a solution of rose water between the flesh and the skin.

Marshal Conrobert talks in axioms. Seeing a man go by who has belonged to all the regimes, in turn Republican and Imperialist, and who to-day is a devoted courtier of Marshal MacMahon

and the Duke of Aumale, Canrobert said: "Poor Janus! he had only *two* faces!" Speaking of ingrates in politics, he said: "What would you have? Fortune is never alone in turning her back on us." The Marshal was talking gallantly to the Duchess of * * *. "Keep on," she said, "Marshal, I am a fortified place. I am not afraid of you." "Take care, Madam. You are a strong place, but the sentinels of the heart are always drowsy."

The second ball of the Elysée was finer than the first, because there were more pretty women. It was the luck of the invitations. The American colony was gracefully represented by Mesdames Hoffman, Darwin, Robinson, Stebbins, and *tutti quanti*.

What romances there are in balls? A portionless young girl—say a hundred thousand francs—comes in with a Greuze face, under a forest of blonde hair. A bored young man, with three hundred thousand francs income, asks her to dance. The thunderbolt of love had struck his heart.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "do you like to dance?" "Very much indeed, Sir." "And to

waltz?" "Passionately, Sir." "Will you make a sacrifice for me?"

The young lady looked at the young man. "Why not?"

"Very well, Mademoiselle, do not dance nor waltz this evening?"

"And for this sacrifice?" "I offer you my name and my fortune."

"This is a great deal," said the young girl, more tempted by her feet than her heart. "Do you hear the violins?"

"Mademoiselle, I am called the Count de * * *, and I have three hundred thousand livres of income."

The young girl doubtless reflected that with three hundred thousand francs income one could pay for a great many fiddles.

"Monsieur," she said, "let us compromise. I will not waltz or dance with any one but you."

"No Mademoiselle, I want a complete sacrifice. You are the most beautiful person at the ball; every one is gazing at you; we will walk into one of the little drawing-rooms and chat like married people."

"Already!" said the young lady, making a saucy face. But she had left her place in the quadrille. She leaned upon the arm of the young man and allowed herself to be taken to the staircase. "This is despotism, Sir." "Yes, Mademoiselle, I wish to be master before if not after."

The young girl mounted the staircase, saying to herself, "Three hundred thousand livres of income, a hotel, a chateau, a racing stable, a hunting equipage, travel like a princess, have caprices like a queen."

They went slowly up the steps, for the Elysée staircase is invaded, after the manner of Venetian fetes, by a sea of guests. The quadrille was ended. All at once the young girl hears the prelude of Olivier Métra's *Serenade*, a Spanish and French waltz, full of rapture and melancholy, full of passion and sentiment. She could resist no longer. She withdraws her hand from the arm which holds it, and glides like a serpent through the human waves; she arrives breathless in the grand salon of the orchestra. She no longer knows what she is doing, the *Serenade*

has so bewitched her. A waltzer who does not know her seizes her on the wing, and bears her into the whirlwind.

Meanwhile what is the three-hundred-thousand-a-year man doing? He is desperate ; he has had happiness in his very hands, and now he sees it vanishing from him like a dream, all because Waldteufel had the unlucky idea to play that diabolical waltz. The unhappy lover tries in vain to reason with himself, to curse his folly, to swear that he will never look at the woman again. He has not the courage to go up the stairs. He descends four steps at a time ; nothing stops him ; he follows the young girl and arrives almost as soon as she does before the orchestra. Alas ! She is already-off for the waltz. She is a thousand leagues away from him. The first-comer holds her in his arms, breathes the fragrance of her adorable blonde hair, revels in the warm glances of her soft eyes, the color of heaven.

Is not this the moment to give you my opinion of the Waltz? I will translate it in these maxims which La Rochefoucauld would hesitate to sign.

*
* *

The waltz is a double life.

* * *

The most reckless women are less dangerous than the most platonic waltzes.

* * *

The waltz can give love to those who have none, as love gives wit to those who lack it.

* * *

Love is often nothing more than the exchange of two quadrilles and the contact of two waltzes.

* * *

A woman has learning enough when she can tell the difference between a two-time and a three-time waltz.

* * *

After waltzing, some women go through a quadrille as a purgatory to the waltz.

* * *

Women pardon to the waltz what they would never permit to the dance.

* * *

We are still in the full tide of dinners, balls, and suppers. Princess Troubetzkoi has given her last Saturday. All the best of Paris was

there in the best foreign company. There was a great deal of congratulation addressed to M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, who is going to unite Paris with London by a submarine railway, and who is the recent father of two new children—if you please. I believe that makes seventeen in all, not counting the time he lost in the East as a bachelor. Madame Thiers was there, but M. Thiers could not break through the lines of the Left Centre which held him prisoner at home. The Duke de Gramont exhibited a new way of wearing his star of the Legion of Honor, abridged to the size of a ten-sou piece, at his button-hole. Emile de Girardin, like me, contented himself with a sprig of lilac at his button-hole. The most decorated man was Ricord, still young with his 77 years. "Every year one year less," he said gayly, but added, "one year less to live." Emmanuel Arago told me at M. Theirs's that he had found a good way to snub people who asked his age. "Alas! I am much nearer 60 than 50." In fact he is 64.

Princess Troubetzkoi wanted M. Caro, the new academician, to repeat his reception speech. As

he refused on the pretext that he did not wish to be tiresome, she said, "Oh I know it is full of holy water and litanies." "For that reason," said M. Caro, "I am to be received in Lent."

Three diplomats, more or less poets, were talking in a corner of the grand salon. They were Lord Lytton, Commander Nigra, and the Persian Ambassador. Each was confiding to the other his last poetical idea. This was the Persian's :

"Youth came down quickly from the mountain. When she came to the plain she laughed in the midst of the dazzling flowers, stars of gold and silver on the carpet of grass.

"The flowers were the passions of the heart, which mocked in their fresh dresses at the somberriament of the pines. And the butterflies, those smiles of the spirit, chattered with the flowers, and said to the pines, Go up to the mountain, for you frighten us in the valley. The pines, who are wise, made no answer to the flowers and butterflies. But when Winter came on dressed all in white, they talked among themselves of the mysteries of heaven and earth. The little

flowers were buried under the snow with the butterflies. They mocked no longer at the grave and pensive pines.

“Thus youth departs—the passions fall under the snow. But man remains and becomes wise.”

P. S.—I forgot to say that the young girl who waltzes and the young man who does not have become engaged. I will tell you their names next week. The fiancé has bought a dispensation so as to be married before Lent.



AT THE OPERA BALL—THE FOLLIES OF AN EVENING—WHAT PEOPLE TALK ABOUT TO STRAUSS MUSIC.

PARIS, Feb. 7, 1875.



WRITE this more or less Carnival-esque letter from the grand fête of the Opera. Hitherto we have found this palace of music and of dance excessively tiresome in default of singers and dancers. To-day it is amusing because it is a festival of surprises and the unforeseen. "Do you like masked balls, Madame? I adore them; that's why I give them." The philosopher says that we should live with uncovered faces; the women say masks are indispensable. When they have no masks they use their fans, because they feel that their only strength is in their armor. It is useless to say that one must know Hebrew to read a woman's heart. You learn after a while to read them in French and English, and Spanish and Russian. Even the German women

do not hide their hearts ; far from it. Byron said it was because there was nothing in them.

Therefore, if women would preserve their power, they must not reveal the answer of their enigma. They must not show the faces of their cards. The great art is to hold curiosity in check. What is more charming than the unknown? One who knew his path in life would scarcely have the courage to go forward. Therefore has Heaven wisely concealed from us the secret of life in this world and the next.

The ball is very pretty and very noisy. There is no amusement but in the tumult. We will leave the slang of the floor to the "strong, muzzled" champion of Molière. We will go into the boxes to see the game of coquetry. In the grand salon you hear the well-known "blague"—the academic style. In the boxes we find the tantalizing wit of women of the world, of actresses and the "hautes cocottes." You must pardon my putting so many words in quotation marks. We are not at the French Academy, but at the National Academy of Music. It is not M. le Duc de Broglie who presides ; it is Strauss, with

all the majesty of a man who knows how to swing his baton. Strauss had retired from affairs—I mean from fiddles—but he grew homesick, like all dethroned kings, and was greatly applauded at his return to his kingdom. He took the floor to say that it was his intention to conduct his people through the thickest of the quadrilles. They applauded him tumultuously ; the painted and sculptured lyres trembled ; all the Apollos of Paul Baudry and the others cast their rays of gold over the silver hairs of the old musician, who contributed a tear to the torrent of laughter.

I enter one of the prettiest boxes ; there are four women there. I do not count the men. I am assailed by four well-armed tongues, each trying to be wittiest. The words jingle like arrows. It is the beginning of the battle.

The most impertinent of the four asks me to supper. “Yes,” I say, “on one condition.” “What ?” “That you write your follies on the tablecloth.” “No, I will write them to-morrow.” “To-morrow it will be too late. I have not come here for idle amusement. I have come to draw

up the romantic chronicle of this fête." "Very well, after supper I swear that I will tell you things that it will take the rest of your life to write ; the most amusing things in the world." "You frighten me. I am afraid you are a hundred years old." "A hundred years? Just look !" And the domino shows me her admirable teeth, which have only just begun to nibble the forbidden apples. The three other dominoes, not wishing to be taken for toothless women, showed their mouths also, as yet unprofaned by the dentist. "Thirty-two teeth," said one, "those are my quarterings of nobility." "Thirty-three," said another, "including one for sugar." The third and the fourth had not counted. "Nobody," said the red domino, "but the Countess — knows how to count her pearls ; her necklace now has five rows ; her husband gave her the first two, and she makes him believe that the other three are false, and he is the only person in Paris who pities his wife—the triple idiot ! He is the only one who does not know that the Countess adds a row at every flirtation."

A *bel esprit* comes into the box. He is not in the fashion, for he still makes phrases. This has grown provincial. "Compliments to my beauty," said the flame-colored domino, "is exactly as if you should light a candle to see the sun rise." "Ah! I recognize you," said the man of the fine speeches; "you are like the Sphinx of the fable, you devour all who do not guess your riddles." "If that were so, you would have been eaten long ago—but I like fresh meat." "Silence! you are nothing but an Ogress," said the steel-gray domino. "It is Madame Blue-beard," said the man of the fine speeches.

The red domino let off a volley of musketry to pulverize the new-comer. "What are you here for? You have not enough left to make a third-class funeral." "It is natural I should come. The most effective undertakers are women; a man is not a mouthful for one of them. You, my fair domino, who are playing the volcano, have buried me in a bed of lava." "You will perhaps go and say that I have loved you for yourself." "One is always loved for

one's self. It is not another man's fortune which you loved in mine. If one loves the millions of M. Rothschild, it is not because they belong to his neighbor. If one is in love with the genius of a poet or the heroism of a soldier, it is not because one is fond of a fool or a coward. You see you do not know what you are talking about." "I have been to your school." "Yes, I paid your tuition. You were not so frank in those days. The frankness of our sweethearts grows as our fortune diminishes. Good-evening." "Go to bed, if you love me no more. Without love man only lives asleep. When he loves, he lives awake."

When the *bel esprit* was gone the red domino cried, "To think that that fellow has been a minister! Yet such people as this govern the world." "There is one thing," I told her, "more powerful than wit, and that is stupidity. Wit is the company of pioneers, stupidity is the innumerable army." "Yes," said the steel gray domino, "I hate stupidity, but we must not speak ill of folly, the mother of us all; that sacred folly which is born of nature and dies

in nature." "You are right ; let us crown folly as a *Rosière*, but let us hate stupidity which aims at wit ; stupidity in its Sunday clothes ; the learned stupidity which makes speeches out of speeches, books out of books, pictures out of pictures, tawdry finery out of old rags. You see below there those girls who are dancing ; they have hired costumes which everybody has worn before them. That is the history of stupidity. Voltaire said that the first poet who compared woman to a rose was a man of wit, while the second was only an imbecile. Voltaire never spoke so well."

Next comes a banker, who thinks that he has the *entrée* everywhere because he is announced by Master-of-Ceremonies Million. "Here is my man," says the steel gray domino. "Are we married?" asks the banker. "Not yet ; but if you wish to publish the banns, you must make a settlement on me." "What is your name?" "Your name is Million, and mine is Diamond. Be my jeweller ; set me in gold." The banker exerts himself to prove that he pays nothing for love but the money of the heart. "That will

do," said the steel-gray domino ; "you are like the misers, who are only prodigal of good words." "Or rather," said the red domino ; "he is like the sun on the snow—he dazzles, but he does not burn."

The banker sees that he is losing his time. "Adieu!" he says ; "I hate masked balls, because there one is always robbed. I prefer balls of society." "Yes," said the steel-gray domino, "you can go there without paying." The banker was replaced by a young husband, who came to restore his spirits. "Aha! here is Gaston, just out of prison. Unhappy man, what hast thou done with thy wife?" "Hush! she is dancing at the Duchess —— : she thinks I am in the smoking-room." "What? you let her dance without watching her partner?" "No danger ; he has feet on which he can sleep standing." "And you have wit now-a-days?" "Why not? My wife has plenty of it, and we are partners by marriage." The young husband was replaced by a diplomat, a former Ambassador of the Sublime Porte. He was very morose, for he predicted to us that France would soon

be dancing the Carmagnole as in 1789, to end with the Ball of Victims as in 1794. He spoke of the European concert, saying it was not Strauss but Bismarck who held the baton. "And what is the moral?" asked the red domino. "The moral is that we must dance and raise soldiers."

Next came the painter Ziem, who was at Constantinople with the Ambassador. They both agreed that Constantinople would begin the universal Charivari. Before that bedeviled orchestra, before these laughing women, before this hurly-burly of all sorts of passions, the painter and the Ambassador, who were two philosophers, predicted all kinds of cataclysms. One could believe that we were on the eve of the Day of Judgment; that the earth would tremble, the sun shoot forth fire and flame, that monarchies and republics would devour each other like hungry rats, leaving nothing but their tails.

A sign of the times! The French have traversed so many catastrophes that they no longer fear anything. We talked of all this smilingly, not forgetting that charming forms were conceal-

ed under the dominoes, and that the supper would be very gay.

There came a General who had distinguished himself on many battle-fields. He wanted to take the box by assault. The women gave him to understand that they were not in a state of seige, which did not prevent him from undertaking the attack of the outer works. But it was no trifle to reduce that garrison. "Take care, General, or you will fall into the moat." "It is you, my pretty domino, who are in danger of falling there, in trying to defend yourself on the platform. Take care, for you know everything which falls into the trench belongs to the soldier." But the lady did not fall, being provided with a high-towered and battlemented virtue. The General was asked if he was ready for another invasion. He said, "Yes, on condition that the women march in advance." "Pshaw!" said the steel-gray domino, "a woman can always disarm a Frenchman, but never a German."

We went to supper, not without having traversed the *foyer*, because women never enjoy themselves without having had their dresses

tumbled and torn a little. There were plenty of impertinences on the staircase, which presented the genuine Carnival of Venice, with its flood of people mounting and descending. There was enough to occupy the ears and the eyes. Coarsely seasoned pleasantries and oaths and slang of the gutter ; and amid these vulgarities here and there one caught real witticisms of the true French, Gaulish Parisian flavor. When the time comes to write "HERE LIES FRANCE," there will not be wanting some man of wit to write her epitaph.

The supper was very gay. The party drank champagne without becoming too champagney. Two of the women took off their masks because they were excessively pretty ; two others kept up the mystery, while eating mandarins under the lace of their masks. The celebrated Saint-Albin, who is seen at every fête, opened the door and asked audience of the steel-gray domino. "I am not here," she said. "Where are you ?" he asked. "I am at home." "Then give me your golden key." "You would be nicely sold if I did."

The two masked women got into rather a

lively quarrel. "My dear, it is all very well for you to ask me to wait for you at forty. We shall see which of us has the advantage." "That is simple enough. I shall have been handsome, and you ugly." This is the way I came to know that one of the dominoes was not pretty. But why did the other conceal her face? Mystery.

An hour was spent in discussing the world of ideas and follies. When we left the Café Anglais, the dawn, hooded in fogs, was opening, according to her ancient habit, the gate of the Sun, who still had on his cotton night-cap, and did not want to get up—a genuine sun of February, all white with snowflakes.

The red domino promised to send me my chronicle ready made, but I know what a woman's promise is worth. For that reason I prefer to send you this, although I write it scarcely knowing if I am asleep or awake.

P. S.—I forgot to say that the Princess Troubetzkoi as "The Woman of Fire"—she who is a woman of snow—and the Marquise Autorti as "Our Lady of Thermidor," were brilliant in wit and raillery.

A WEEK OF EVENTS — DINNER TALK AT M. THIERS'S—RECEPTION OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS AT THE ACADEMY—M. HOUSSAYE'S MASKED BALL—MARRIAGE OF HENRY HOUSSAYE—NEW ART PUBLICATIONS.

PARIS, Feb. 9, 1875.



HE week has been crowded with events ; tempests at Versailles, squalls at Paris, the Wimpfen trial, the reception of Alexandre Dumas II. at the Academy, and finally the burial of the Carnival, which was, nevertheless, in perfect health ; in fact it may be said that Ash Wednesday was its resurrection day.

If I talked politics I would tell you how uncertain are the best informed men of the future. I dined with M. Thiers on Shrove Tuesday ; a very brilliant banquet, where everybody was clever, especially the master of the house. Of course the company was not exclusively of the

Left Centre. The Duchess Colonna said she did not like Centres, because men without faults are equally without virtues. "It is only at the extremes that you find great men," Princess Troubetzkoi exclaimed; "but M. Thiers proves the contrary!" Some one spoke of princes, and M. Emile de Girardin was reproached for having deserted them. He did not care to excuse himself, but said the favor of princes was like luck at play. "You win at first, but you end by losing everything in their company."

Madame Thiers, who never speaks without saying something—unlike so many women who only speak to say nothing—said, among other things, one which deserves to be preserved: "What makes men so unhappy is their inordinate thirst for happiness."

We have already read the speech of Alexandre Dumas and that of the Comte d'Haussonville. The difference between them is that the first is written for everybody while the second appeals only to the refined. M. d'Haussonville is a fastidious man who cares very little what is thought of him in the lower classes. He thinks, with

some reason, that it is a merit in literature not to be adapted to everybody. He says that in letters as well as the arts all that is good is confined to the initiated. In substance as well as in form his speech was more felicitous than that of Dumas. What succeeds at the Academy is not knock-down wit, but that discreet cleverness which plays with its fan, at the same time without prudery. In one word, it is French and not Gaulish wit.

To one who cannot read between the lines, many clear hits at the author of the *Dame aux Camélias* would be incomprehensible, but to those who have learned the rhetoric of the Institute, it was a delightful treat. Alexandre Dumas will be none the worse for it; but he had to listen, he who understands everything, to more than one cruel truth. It was his own fault; for why should he have delivered his own eulogy under pretext of praising the poet of Mary Stuart? Why should he have compared that tragic queen to that tragi-comic young woman who is called the Lady of the Camélias.

But what are these tournaments of eloquence

at this hour when Paris is borne in a whirlwind of dance and of politics? Next Friday I shall have the honor of receiving at my house most of the Parisian and American belles. I shall say nothing about the fête afterwards, but I shall tell you a little about it beforehand. I only wanted five hundred persons, the cream of the cream, the flower of the early peas, the *ne plus ultra*. But I am literally besieged. The Opera Ball did not succeed because there was such a mixed society; they say that my Venetian fête will succeed because everybody will know or guess at the others; political society, diplomatic, and high life. The women are going so recklessly into costumes that Worth and the three or four great dressmakers of Paris have gone crazy over their needles. Several women are to change their costumes several times, and I shall have to set aside a room for these metamorphoses. This mysterious salon will be like a "star" dressing-room; in fact, for this night all the women will be actresses because all will play some part or other under their hoods. So the men may beware of the brigands à la Hood, as in Sherwood Forest. There

seems to be no fear of these dangers, as the most serious personages are willing to risk them. For three days I have been invisible, as if I had the Heliotrope of Dante, to escape the necessity of refusing invitations. You cannot imagine the farces which are played by men in pursuit of a pink card. One man sent me his seconds yesterday under the pretense that I had gravely insulted him in shutting my door on him. My seconds answered that we would see the sun rise if he wished it, in the Bois de Vincennes—but after the fête. I have also duels on hand with the women. It is rumored that I am about to lay away my bachelor life, for which it is certainly time; but the origin of this story is that I am about to marry my oldest son, M. Henry Houssaye, the historian. It is a love match, after the American and not the French style. We often dined at Count Potocki's, who, since he was 20 years of age, has had the fancy of numbering his years by his millions. He is now seventy-two years old, and has seventy-two millions. Do not be alarmed; my son is not marrying the millions of Count Potocki. They would be a great embar-

rassment to him with his severe taste for the history of antiquity. He marries a young and lovely Italian Princess, a Pignatelli, Princess Cerchiara, whose father was ambassador of the King of Naples in Russia. In course of dining and sitting together the Historian and the Princess perceived that they were in love. Is not a love match the true *mariage de convenance*? The Princess, who is the eldest child, and who has no brother, brings as a dower to her husband the title of Prince of Cerchiara. But what is far better, she brings him her beauty and her heart, without mentioning a palace at Naples, where they will go to flirt through their honeymoon.

But I see that I am committing an indiscretion in giving you a piece of news which I have refused to give to any journal in Paris.

To change the subject, there are few new books, though they are reprinting a great many old ones. For instance, here is St. Beuve, who comes out of his grave with articles of his earliest youth, the new *Causeries du Lundi*. St. Beuve was a rather pleasant talker, but unfortu-

nately in his talks you perceive the schools lightly gone to seed, the odor of the lamp, the mouldy perfume pedantry. His fault was that he saw neither high nor far. He committed the error of holding his dark lantern, which was sometimes a very brilliant one, to the trivial side of things. Therefore over all that exquisite work where there are so many charming pages you will soon see stealing the shadow of neglect. It is not wise to reprint fifty volumes where the great figures of literature are obscured by the infinitely little.

A new journal has been started under the title of *Les Beaux Arts*. It is a publication in folio, which will take its place beside *L'Artiste*. It will be especially a book of engravings, containing many contemporary master-pieces; the first number contains Prud'hon's Repentance, unpublished designs of Eugene de la Croix, Chavame's War of Paris, and a ceiling of Paul Baudry, four admirable things, which will be one day priceless, and which cost to-day only three francs. All the collectors of France have made money in the last few years. For instance, those

who subscribe to *L'Artiste* now have four times the worth of their subscription ; it will be the same with the *Beaux Arts*. The *Baisers* of Dorat are sold now for 2000 francs on account of the engravings.



THE ETHICS OF FLIRTATION—THE THREE DEAD
PAINTERS, MILLET, CHINTREUIL AND COROT—
THE ROMANCE OF A SERVANT-GIRL'S POR-
TRAIT—M. HOUSSAYE'S VENETIAN FETE—A
TRUCE OF POLITICS IN SOCIETY.

PARIS, Feb. 21, 1875.



EVERYBODY in Paris knows the lady who goes by the name of Madame Threestars. This is her pseudonym, her mask, her symbol. She is an adventuress, who never crosses the Rubicon because she still believes in duty; but she runs all sorts of risks, believing that what you call "flirtation" and we call *parfait amour* is not in the least damaging to feminine virtue. This is a question worthy of examination.

Let us first describe Madame Threestars. If the plastic in woman reveals her destiny, it is certainly in Madame Threestars that we find the mission of beauty towards love. Her form is a

harmony of her character. Everything in her is pleasure and similitude. She has the twofold possession of her strength and her beauty. This combination raises her far above other women who do not enjoy the continually renewed charm of expression. Her beauty has the movement of a soul and the immobility of a statue. When she walks an invisible world follows her ; her shoulders, her hands, her limbs, her supple waist continue the loving symphonies of her face. Her dress, her shawl, conceal nothing of her penetrable and indissoluble charm. Her bust is noble and fine as a work of art. Her feet are a little like those of Queen Bertha, but one needs not be perfect to be human, and especially to be inhuman, which she will probably be for a long time to come. Her feet then are large, but they form a pedestal which affirms all the delicacy of her form, all the power of the womanly statue.

She thinks herself blameless because she has as yet committed only little sins. You find in her the audacity of a page. She is thus bold because she walks in company with her con-

science. If some day—do not forget this trait of character—you should see her timid and reserved, it is because she will have become like so many others, a hardened sinner. In the meanwhile she goes everywhere. She is adored by everybody because she loves nobody.

Apropos of her, I return to the question of *parfait amour*, or flirtation. There are grave philosophers who would exclude these two words from the Dictionary of the Academy, under pretext that the Way of Love of which St. Augustine speaks, leads to Dante's hell of Passions. These serious philosophers are wrong. We do right to brighten life occasionally with smiles and sunbeams. The Way of Love leads generally to marriage. As to those who get upset on the way, so much the worse for them, but examples are necessary. It is certainly no great crime to linger a little by the green wayside, to pluck the wild flowers, to make nosegays of forget-me-nots, in one word, to waste a few happy hours. Wasted time, is it not time gained?

Madame Threestars has a sister-in-law who is very devout. They bear the same name in

society, having married brothers, with the difference that one is Countess and the other Viscountess. Now the latter, who is the devout one, is not quite all she might seem. She goes to confessional frequently, and it is reasonable to suppose she has a good deal to confess. It is rumored very quietly that she has gone somewhat too far—to find material for confession. Do you know what the result of this will be in the outside world, when this little scandal begins to be whispered? The only one mentioned will be Madame la Comtesse, who has nothing to do with it, but whose name, already famous for her coquetries, will attract to her the whispers circulating about her sister-in-law's adventure. From this you may draw your own moral for or against flirtation. Which is worth most in the world, the approval of your own conscience or of public opinion?

Why should I not talk to you here about two painters of nature who have at last attained their apotheoses—Millet and Chintreuil? It is because they are dead, of course. It is always so in France. The aureole never shines but

over the grave. As long as a man is alive they seem afraid to give him his crown. No one cares for his poverty, for Chintreuil and Millet may almost be said to have starved. Dying of persistent toil, with poverty always on the threshold—is this not dying of hunger? You probably have in New York pictures of these admirable artists, who both understood nature, the one poetically, the other truthfully, but both with the profound sentiment of sincere masters. They did not play with the surface like those who seek only for effects. They looked for the soul of things. Their trees and their grasses think and love in the impulse which God has given in creating the world. It is the universal love, fruitful and holy, perpetuating the mystery of the infinite.

Yes, as a critic has said, life was hard to Chintreuil as to Millet; but harder still to the former, for he never felt the recompense of renown. Death is terrible to those who feel themselves scarcely arrived at the maturity of their talents. But after all, the recompense of those who are moved by a passion for the beautiful does not

lie in praise ; it is in their efforts to draw near the ideal which they pursue. Where would you find one among the most unhappy of them who would change fates with Rothschild? Chintreuil had the faith of an apostle. To come nearer to nature he made himself *primitive*, like the English pre-Raphaelites. Of course, when he came into the world of art with a new manner, he was not understood, so fixed in us is the bad habit of not changing our habits. Yet who had ever discovered, as he had, the rain and the sun playing together in a universal harmony of contrasts? Paul de St. Victor has well described—but too late—this charming painter : “ Dawns and twilights, storms and mists, prairies and forests, river sides and the heart of groves, parks and gardens, plains specked with crows, flowing waters where fawns come to drink, heather and flowering broom, beaches and open seas, rocks and cliffs, the whole poem of nature is here intoned in stanzas often incomplete, often merely sketched, but each with its own melancholy or charm, its note grave or tender, its impression winning or sincere.”

Chintreuil sought rather the musical than the picturesque sensation, because he arrived at nature through emotion, rather than through admiration. He never wished to see her but at melancholy hours, in the twilight or before a storm. His sky is never in full light. He loved clouds, as if they revealed the thought of nature. Poor Millet, who has just died, loved nature in any guise, so long as there were peasants in the scene. He painted morning, noon, or evening, whatever the state of the sky—resolved to see the truth and paint it.

Just now nobody talks of anything but Millet and Chintreuil. Unhappily, we shall soon join to these names in their week's celebrity, that of Corot, which did not become famous until the great landscape painter had passed his sixtieth year. Corot is going to die! The Academy of Fine Arts will then recognize all its wrongs towards him, as towards Millet and Chintreuil. When we remember that these three painters are not Academicians, we try to think who represents nature there. It is only recently that Corot has begun to sell his pictures. Before

that he lived in poverty, almost like his two comrades—although he had some fortune from his father. But he gave away most of his income. One day, to reward a young servant who was very gentle and obedient, he said to her, "I will paint thy portrait." He did not make her beautiful, but he made her charming—a face of great originality. The young servant was not pleased with it because it was "not like other folks." Her lover, a dealer in picture frames, offered her twenty francs for the portrait. She thought it was too much, and would only take ten francs. Who would believe it?—that picture remained more than a year in the frame-maker's window, unsold at the price of \$25, and he let it go at last for \$20. The man who bought it sold it again for \$40. To-day one of our great amateurs offers 10,000 francs for this portrait, a dowry for the servant girl if she had kept it. Corot said to her one morning, "What have you done with your portrait?" She answered that her lover, who was jealous, had taken it away from her. But Corot knew the story. He said, "You great simpleton, I must pay for your stupidity," and

gave her a landscape out of his dusty studio. "Now, this time you must wait till I am dead before you sell it." The great simpleton promised with tears in her eyes. But—such is the human heart—ever since Corot's life was despaired of, the great simpleton is already trying to "trade off" the landscape. Which shows that it is not worth while to reward stupidity.

Enough of painting—or you will end by saying, whenever you see my name, in the words of the placards on freshly-whitewashed gates, "Take care of the paint."

There was dancing yesterday at the Countess Duchatel's, whose salon bears something the same relation to Orleanist society as that of the Princess Mathilde to the Bonapartist. Naturally, one meets at Madame Duchatel's the princes of the Orleanist family; but, as at the Princess Mathilde's you may find Orleanists in truancy, so at Madame Duchatel's there are Bonapartists who think that politics should be left in the cloak-room. They are perfectly right; one does not go into society to conspire. One goes for the nobler object of showing one's clothes or

passing the time. Therefore, day before yesterday, at the Venetian fête which I gave, I made of my hotel a neutral ground where all parties came together. It was the veritable coalition of the two Centres ; it was even a meeting of the two Extremes—for it is known that extremes meet. It seemed perfectly natural that well-bred men like the Comte de Paris and Marshal Canrobert, Gen. Fleury and Admiral Pothuau should meet at the same moment before a domino or before a picture. I had every shade of party : Gen. Turr, who captured Naples, and Gen. Bosco, who defended it ; the Minister of Greece and the Ambassadeur of Turkey ; the Comte d'Haussonville and Alexandre Dumas, his victim, crowned with the flowers of the Academy.

The American world was there entirely at home. It is known that I have, in a manner, naturalized myself with my pen in the United States, so that they shook hands with me like fellow-citizens. The New World rivalled the Old in brilliancy of costume ; it was dazzling. When any one recognized an Américaine by her accent

he would say, "I am not cheated here—this one is pretty."

There was wit in every corner. All trouble in this respect was taken from the master of the house. What charming things were caught on the wing. A lovely Marquise, disguised as a Devil, said to the Comte de Paris, "Would you like to be King, Monseigneur?" "No," he replied, "for then you would not tell me the truth."

A Princess said to me as she took leave, "The best word of the evening was said to me by my little boy before I came away. "Mamma, why do you disguise yourself when you are so pretty? Take care, or God might condemn you to wear a mask always, to punish you. Come to bed with me, and send your domino to my aunt; she is ugly!" The Princess added, "I am going to wake up the dear child to show him that God has not sentenced me to wear a mask always."

ARDENT ACTRESSES—A WIFE'S VENGEANCE—A
COSSACK PRINCESS—OLGA DE JANINA—KITE
FLYING IN PARIS—M. DE ROTHSCHILD'S LITTLE
JOKE.

PARIS, March 15, 1875.



IN America, when you have a fire, you burn up a city. In Paris, when you hear the cry of fire, it is generally an actress's wardrobe. The number of comedienues I have seen burned out is incredible. People take advantage of their ardent natures to argue that they set their own dwellings on fire. Aurélien Scholl, the Champfort of our Parisian journalists, said yesterday in his chronicle, "There is nothing new — Mademoiselle Lasseny has not been burned out this week, nor any of her sort." The last fire consumed 300,000 francs worth of furniture for Mlle. Lasseny, whose apartment in the Place Vendome was like an earthly paradise, after the apples were

eaten. The insurance companies are loud in clamor, but the public answers, Why do you insure actresses then? Has not Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt been burned out twice? Draw your wallets and pay like gentlemen! You know you are dealing with imprudent beauties who go to bed late and never blow out their candles. Do you dare accuse the princesses of the stage of arson? Take care they don't make you pay half a million or so damages for assailing their honor. When a journalist asks damages for slander they give him four or five dollars to patch up his wounded reputation. But in the case of an actress you can't give too much, because there is so much repairing to be done.

Far be it from me to accuse these theatrical ladies seriously of setting these fireworks in operation at their homes. At bottom they are "honest fellows," if not honest women. Besides, Mlle. Lasseny, having allowed her dogs, which she adored, to be burned in the conflagration, has given the best proof that there was no premeditation. If the fire had destroyed merely her lovers, we might be permitted to doubt.

We have in Paris a great lady, a foreigner, who goes into society with an unblushing front, and who, nevertheless, has committed that inhuman crime—a woman who has set her husband on fire. The story may be worth telling. There is an extenuating circumstance. The husband did not love his wife. Why did he marry her, then? In America a man sees a pretty girl with no money and marries her, saying that beauty is the same as specie ; and he is right. In Europe he sees an ugly woman draped in bank-notes and marries her, saying there is no happiness without money ; and he is wrong. This is what Count d'H — did: He took Mademoiselle Armande O — because of the million she incumbered. But he had reckoned without his host. Mlle. O — was a character. She was not to be trifled with. She at once took high ground with her husband. "Monsieur," she said to him in full honeymoon, which in this case was *la lune rousse*, "I know you have a liaison which controls you, but I will let you know you are not to control me. If you behave as a gentleman I will pardon you for the sums that connection has already cost

you and me. But if I find you only married me for my million I will be revenged." The husband accepted all her revenges with philosophic calmness, and continued to waste her substance. When dignity has fled from a house its inmates are no longer man and woman—they are merely criminals and maniacs. In this unhappy marriage they came—shall I say it?—even to blows. Violence took the place of insult. The husband talked of a separation of person and goods. "Ah, yes!" said the lady, "I understand. You wish a separation of persons, having made way with the goods." "Yes," said the husband coldly. "That does not suit me," said the wife. "You have killed my heart, my reason, my honor; and now I shall have your life."

Count d'H —— tried to laugh at her. "But, Madame, why should you wish my death when I ask nothing better than to leave you?" "Because that is my only possible revenge." "Nonsense, my dear. Cowards and women revenge themselves, and you are neither. It must be that you want to marry again." "Why not, Sir? I have been very little married with you." This charm-

ing conjugal conversation ended with the usual climax of endearment *à la Sganarelle*. The wife had the bitterer tongue, the husband the heavier fist. The lady retired, beaten but not satisfied, and resolved to be rid of her husband. But how to go about it? She was not strong enough to use the poniard, and she revolted at the cowardice of poison. This is what took place. One evening she found him in bed reading a letter in a woman's handwriting. In a sudden rage she set his curtains on fire and ran away, locking the door on the outside. He screamed Fire, but the servants were too far to hear him. It was horrible. He ran frantically about the room. The Chamber was upholstered in Louis XV. cretonne, which instantly took fire from the bed. M. d'H — at last got to a window, and as he was about to throw himself out, his wife took pity and opened the door, asking what was the matter with a look of innocent surprise. The husband's life was saved, but his disfigurement was complete.

The case has been much talked about, and there are those who do not hesitate to defend the

wife. They accuse the husband of having tormented, deceived, and ruined his wife. When the court ordered their separation there was only left to her some three or four thousand francs a year of her fortune, with which she can make very little figure in the world. But the husband will show to still less advantage with his scarred and seamed cheeks and forehead. It is sad to carry into the world the scars received at home.

We have another strong-minded woman in Paris—Madame Olga de Janina, who is making a frightful noise. She came to see me yesterday, with a priest! Here is her history, as she gives it, in a few words. She is a Don Cossack, with all the wildness of that desert country. She is part faun and part centaur, with blood of fire. There are women of whom you never think without a prayer-book under their arm; this one always has a horse whip in her hand. A Princess upon the banks of the Don, she is at present merely a pianist and novelist. She plays the piano like Liszt, and writes novels like George Sand, when George Sand wrote *Elle et Lui*. In her famous book, *Les Souvenirs d'une Cosaque*,

she relates with an incredible tranquillity of spirit, her adventures with Abbé Liszt—the famous Liszt of the salons. The illustrious pianist had flung himself into the Church to escape from the women, for he was not a hardened sinner. But Mme. Olga de Janina, who had disembarassed herself of her husband, took Liszt without ceremony out of his sanctuary. The penitent became impenitent again. For three years Liszt went on squandering his share in Paradise in company with this rose-garlanded demon. Mme. Olga de Janina assured me in the presence of the priest, who was not listening, that she spent in these escapades with the Abbé Liszt three millions of francs—a million a year. I believe a great deal was spent in charity. The devil had his share and the poor had theirs. But how the money was thrown out of the window! For instance, they drew upon the celebrated garden cultivated by Alphonse Karr, for cart-loads of Parmese violets to strew the path of the great pianist, whether he happened to be a Pesth, at Venice, or at Rome. They kept open house for all the eccentrics of Europe. If Olga de Janina had been merely a

simple mortal, Liszt would have declined such publicity with her. But a Princess from the banks of the Don—that was original and princely. This fine train of life could not last always. Liszt loves life at full speed ; the good man is no anchorite. He is a saint of Sybaris and not of Bethlehem. Olga de Janina became finally a crumpled rose leaf. They separated when the three millions were gone, he to return to the church, and she to pursue her fantastic destiny.

All I have here told you is the narrative of this haughty Cossack, who has hurled herself like a thunderbolt among us. She cannot take a step without raising a storm. She thinks her riding-whip is a sceptre, and so is afraid of nothing. She gives a cut with it as another would shake hands. She came to me to ask me to act as her second in a duel. I said I would if they were to fight with roses, and recalled to her the fable where Jupiter, wishing to punish a demi-goddess who had been playing the man, ordered her to be whipped with roses. I put myself on guard against a blow with the whip, but as she is well up in her classics, she laughed

and shook hands. It is a pity she has so much of the devil in her ; for she has a really wonderful talent. It is Liszt himself at the piano ; the same energy, the same *furia*, the same virtuosity. She gives the piano a soul, as Orpheus gave one to his lyre. No one would imagine the strength of this woman, who is as thin as Sarah Bernhardt. You will see her some day in America, for the Old World is too little for her.

But it is wasting time talking of music just now. The only fashionable harmony is the jingling of gold. There is a rage of speculation. Since the Spanish Mobilier started from 500 francs to rise to 1500, the capital stock amounting to 120,000,000, the result is that the stock operators have made 240,000,000 in a few days on these securities alone. Therefore, everybody is crazy for his share in the golden shower. The Bourse is invaded by an entirely new public. The young *Crevés* who have devoured their fortunes in the Quartier Brédad want to repair them with one stroke at the Bourse. The young ladies of the Half-World are equally eager to try the hazards of the game. They are not allowed to

enter the Bourse, but they drive in their coupés all around the building. It is comical to see these little powdered faces leaning out of the carriage-windows to give their orders. They call them Bankeresses. The curb-stone brokers now wear white cravats, and talk of "our lady clients." This will soon end by the ruin of these ladies. But the men will have to pay for it.

The great financiers pass with mien unaltered amid these revolutions of the speculators; they have hard heads which the games of the Bourse cannot intoxicate. And speaking of this reminds me of a story which paints the portrait of old Baron Rothschild. They were playing at Marquis d'Aligre's, a genuine financier's game, that is to say, for very small stakes. The Marquis was losing. He threw a louis on the table, which rolled on the floor. The Marquis d'Aligre dropped on all-fours to look for his money, disturbing everybody and delaying the game. Baron de Rothschild was dealing. "A louis lost!" he said, "that is worth looking for;" and putting on an expression of deep anxiety, he rolled up a thousand-france note, lighted it at

the candle, and held it to assist Marquis d'Aligre in his search. The whole character of the old gentleman was in this action. He was terribly avaricious of his pennies, but he would sacrifice a thousand-france note to do any one a favor or get a laugh on him.



A DAY AT LONGCHAMPS—THE NEW AND THE
OLD PILGRIMAGES—EDGAR QUINET—HISTORIAN
AND POET — AMEDEE ACHARD — A PIOUS
DUELLIST.

PARIS, March 22, 1875.



HAVE just returned from the races at Longchamps, where more than one of your countrywomen appeared to-day as leaders of the fashion. Formerly America used to come to Paris to take lessons of grace and dash ; but to-day she comes to dictate her modish laws. The time will come when the typical Parisiennes will be American women.

We have almost always here a Holy Week framed in tempests, of rain or hail or snow. It seems as if heaven wished to give the earth a white resurrection robe after the penance of Lent. This year, however, we have had a radiant sunshine, which shows a good intelligence between heaven and earth, due, perhaps, to the late change in the Cabinet. The chesnut-trees are

about to bloom. The flowers of Easter opened under the most beautiful sun of silver. Nature, though shivery still, ventures to loosen her zone. Like the fair maid of Ovid, the leaves and flowers blossom in her hands. Her blonde locks scatter the perfume of the hawthorn and the primrose. She is crowned with two red branches of the Judea-tree and two of the white lilac. She treads the green carpet of the springing wheat; she wears in her bosom a spray of peach blossoms; she breathes in passing on the snowy boughs of the apple-trees, and smiles to see it is not the frost that covers them with silver.

I saw all nations in the Champs Elysées and the Bois de Boulogne. The pilgrimage to Long-champs still exists, with plenty of pilgrims though there is no Abbey. It was the opening spectacle of the Spring. The women smiled like roses, though some were hidden in their coupés like violets. You must not think we are less Catholic now than in the days of the Abbey, for it was, after all, no more than a succursal of the opera. There is a letter extant of St. Vincent de Paul, in which he reproaches the nuns there with wear-

ing perfumed Spanish gloves and flame-colored ribbons. But that is only a beginning. For, if we can believe him, the doors of the cells were left open at night. So, when Mademoiselle Le Maure, of the Opera, took the vail at Longchamps, she made no change in her habits. Her admirers of the green-room came to the convent and enjoyed her singing all the same in the *Ténébers*. The chronicles of the eighteenth century are full of Longchamps. Who has forgotten the tradition of the four horses harnessed with gold and silk which drew the coach of La Guimard, followed by that of La Duthé, a silver couch of Venus? In 1785 an Englishman was seen at Longchamps with a coach whose wheels glittered with precious stones. His horses were shod with silver set with rubies and emeralds.

The Aristophanesque comedy was to-day replaced by a New Year's pantomime. Carriage-loads of maskers passed by, scattering their jests, their conceits, their grains of attic salt or lumps of stupidity. Jeannot saluted with his red cap or looked with a lantern for a *rosière*. Cadet Roussel, dressed in gray paper, philosophized

good-naturedly. The servant of Molière asked for a certificate of slack-jaw, recounting all sorts of scandalous stories of the fashionable world, sometimes with the figure of Dorine and again with the affected airs of a *Précieuse*.

Do you know why Longchamps exists no longer? It is because it exists continually. The Hosannah has changed to a Hurrah, and horses are the saints of the new calendar. Formerly people came from every point of France to assist at the ceremonies of Longchamps. Now, nobody takes the trouble to go, except those who are out for an airing. The fashion journals will tell you what there is new under the sun of Longchamps. That is not my affair. I have already spoken to you of the great dress question. Unfortunately, it seems that the new fashions require still more material than ever. When the Creator made woman, He placed in her umbrageous dressing-room fig leaves and vine leaves against the day when coquetry should lead her to finery. Dresses in those days ruined no husbands, but the women were not less fair when they bathed their bare feet in the dew, with only

their hair for umbrellas. But there came a time when it was decided that the business of women was to spin wool. Soon she had slaves to turn her spinning-wheel, and already the poets began their tirades. But it was far worse when the women passed from wool to silk, and then began to embroider figures and flowers in gold. The prices of the dresses of ancient queens and courtesans already made a pretty contrast with that of the fig leaf. But at least, in antiquity and the middle ages, a fine dress lasted a long time. The historians tell us that gala robes reappeared on every great occasion ; the dresses of great grandmothers were proudly worn. To-day our queens and courtesans wear their gowns but once. They would think themselves dishonored if they did not change their clothes every day, even as nature changes its vesture.

Let us talk of something more serious.

The funeral processions succeed each other rapidly. The great generation is passing away. Edgar Quinet followed close upon Ledru-Rollin. He died suddenly as if he were falling asleep, after more than half a century of labor. You

might say of him that he was a working man of thought who never rested for Sunday. For men of letters and for statesmen there is no repose but in the grave. No man has set more ideas in motion in the domain of philosophy than this restless thinker, who died without finding his philosopher's stone. He wished to be everything, but he discovered that man was nothing, no more than a reed bending under the hand of destiny, but at least, like the thinking reed of Pascal, always rising towards God. Edgar Quinet was profoundly religious. In his fine book on the Revolution, he sees that what destroyed the men of that time was their denial of religion. There can be no society without worship, any more than there can be harvests without sun. The idea of God is the sun of the soul.

Edgar Quinet had shared in all the emotions of France since Napoleon I. to our day. He assisted in the ardor of youth at the fall of the first Empire, at the Restoration of the Bourbons, at the revival of Greece. He was in the Romantic revolt ; he fought against the Government

of July. He belonged to the Constituent Assembly of 1848. The *coup d'état* gave him the long leisure of exile. He only returned to France at the last revolution which made him a representative of the people, but a representative rather too platonic. Latterly he sat with folded arms, recognizing that the march of humanity is slow. When I speak of folded arms I refer to the politician, for the man of letters died pen in hand, under the eyes of his wife, the daughter of a Moldavian poet, a true literary man's wife, enthusiastic and devoted, with spots of ink on her fingers.

If Edgar Quinet had been content with being a great poet, he would have gained a wider fame. But the demon of politics carried him away to the mountain. How much time he lost, trying to reform the world before it was time ! This is also the case with Victor Hugo, though he, with a surer instinct, early withdrew from the storm, in the company of the Muses. Politics steal away no more of his time. When he dies the world will be surprised to learn how much he leaves behind. Philosophy dominated Quinet

too young. He was always *synthetic*, whether as poet in his *Napoleon* or his *Wandering Jew*, or as historian in his history of the Revolution. Will his fame endure—this great mind and brave heart? Perhaps the mysterious spark was lacking.

At the same time died Agricol Perdiguier, who was also a representative of the people; and whom Georges Sand took as a type in her *Tour de France*. In those days Georges Sand was also a socialist because it was the fashion. If she were young now, she would wear a dress with an exaggerated train. She drew Perdiguier as the journeyman carpenter working in a castle and turning the Chatelaine's head. He had plenty of natural wit. Some one said in his presence, "I like the Republic, but I don't like Republicans." "Why not say," he cried, "that you like apples, but are opposed to apple-trees."

Amedée Achard is also dead, a charming story-teller and a gentlemanly journalist. He was better than his work, in wit and grace and fascination. His pen never rightly rendered him. He once had a famous duel with Fiorentino.

Neither of them knew how to handle a sword. Achard was run through and thought to be killed. Fiorentino fell upon his knees ; they thought it was to weep over Achard. But—horrible profanation !—it was to thank the Holy Virgin for allowing him to kill his man ! Achard came to himself and cast a glance of evil meaning on Fiorentino, who died soon after in good earnest.

Their friends are now wondering whether they have met.



THE AMERICAN AND THE FRENCH VIEW OF LIFE
—HOUSES, HOSTELRIES, AND TOMBS—THE WAY
NEWSPAPERS ARE MADE IN FRANCE—PERSON-
ALS OF FIGARO—SAVANTS AND HORSES—A
SURPRISE PARTY.

PARIS, March 28, 1875.



WHO said that we were becoming Prussianized? We never had anything in common with the spirit of Berlin. Prussia took our philosophers away from us in the eighteenth century, and she has taken two provinces from us in these times. But she has never been able to impose her habits upon us. Has she fashions? We know nothing about it. Her family virtues are not ours. In one word, the sun does not rise for us on that side. We have imitated the English a good deal, having begun with the Greeks and Romans, the Spaniards and the Italians. To-day it is America which is teaching us our paces in many respects. We are attempting

her boldness and enterprise in our industrial and financial undertakings. America has the genius of those great operations which move the world. She leaves the mark of her footstep everywhere. If America has not yet had her philosophers like Plato or Descartes, like Aristotle or J. J. Rousseau, she possesses what is much better, the philosophy of human life. For instance, the Americans have the good sense to know that man is not eternal on the earth. He passes, he plants his flag, and does not bother about his epitaph. "Here lies a man who worked" is the best of funeral orations. For the American, life is a voyage, the earth is a hostelry; while for the Frenchman life is an everlasting habit of always doing the same thing. They therefore establish themselves on the earth as if they were never going to leave it. The houses they build can never seem solid enough to shelter their fragile lives. M. Thiers, philosopher as he is, and 78 years of age, is rebuilding his hotel burned by the Commune with a watchful care which occupies several hours of every day. He is anxious to get into it by next winter,

but he admits that it will be several years before he is completely at home in it!

To be "at home" is usually considered wisdom, but is there not also a certain amount of folly in it? How often have I heard people in France say, "We shall not be happy until our house is built." There is a Moslem proverb, "To build your house is to build your tomb." In fact, in every new house a sacrifice must be made to Death, the only mythological deity which survives. How many of these sacrifices I have seen in the temples built by Parisians to their pride!

Meanwhile, America is building up the world, or rather she says that her house is the universe. There is one thing that we are trying to borrow from America, and that is the art of making a newspaper. In Paris we are mere school-boys, and idlers as well. When we have read the papers we know no more than before. We must go into society, on 'Change, or on the boulevard to learn the news, while the reporters of the daily papers are playing dominoes in the cafés. Do you want to know how a paper is made here? It is

very simple : the journals make themselves out of one another. The scissors do far more than the pen. Paragraphs out of the evening papers become articles in the morning papers, and the reverse. You discuss with your opponent a political question already discussed a thousand times, and a thousand times more muddled at the end than the beginning. Darkness instead of light is thrown upon it. A Prefect of the the Fourth of September, who was as good a Prefect as he had been journalist, recounted, while dining with me at the Château de Breuil—for it was the Prefect of Laon—how, one morning, seeing that all his associates had gone off to a civil funeral, he decided to make the paper by himself. He scissored away at the other papers so much and so well, that he needed only a line of invention here and there to reduce to harmony these heterogeneous ideas gathered from every side. The paper came out at four o'clock, and at five, his editor-in-chief, who had been to make a speech at the civil funeral, came to congratulate him, saying the paper had never been so complete or so interesting. Since that

time the editor-in-chief has followed no other system.

Perhaps you imagine in reading our papers that all those fine things leap alive from the brain of Minerva. They have usually existed at least a hundred times the life of the rose, and are taken up and turned inside out for the occasion. For instance, M. Emile de Girardin has always a highly interrogative article ready for any possible event. We call this reserved wit.

For several months the *Figaro* has been taking on a Franco-American character. It has started a page of advertisements which is very amusing to Frenchmen, and especially to Frenchwomen. You have doubtless seen this innovation of the Greeks of Paris. I suppose the Postmaster-General will soon be asking for a new tax upon this style of correspondence which dispenses with the mails. For instance, one meets a lady with a spray of white lilac in her corsage. If he is a Don Juan he salutes her, proves that he knows her, and begs to inhale the fragrance of her lilacs. But if he is a timid man, he declares his adoration in the *Figaro*. Now,

as fifty women probably wore lilacs in their bosoms at the same moment, you may fancy the embarrassment of the timid man if the whole fifty answer. Amateurs and impertinents also intervene. In answer to the question, "Why this silence?" somebody answers, "Why this recollection?" There are enough idle people who are willing to pay a louis for their joke. For instance, apropos to the departure of a man too much appreciated in his quarter, a woman writes: "There was seen yesterday a long procession of widows with large black veils. They were the relics of Destenque of the Folies-Marigny, on their way to the Eastern Railway. 'When will he return?' was the sobbing chorus. The locomotives started back in dismay."

We have two important conventions now in session, the savants' and the horses'. Of the latter the Marquis de Mornay is President. Among the Committee are the Comte de Juigné, Vicompte Aguado, Marquis de Castelbajac, Duc de Lesparre, Comte Roederer. Baron A. de Rothschild and Prince d'Aremberg. They are scattering ribbons at both places, but you

will easily understand that "all Paris" is much more interested in the horse show than in the Scientific Convention. In the first place the music is better at the Palais de l'Industrie than at the Sorbonne, and there is more amusement in every way. To-day there was a reception with full orchestra. During the week we will see light carriage horses, Victoria horses for Park and for hunting, heavy carriage and saddle horses. And floods of ribbons of which the horses seem very proud. Francis I. said, "My horse has more pride than I." Saturday there is to be a military carrousel by the schools of the Staff and of St. Cyr. Crowds of English cross the channel for this occasion. This is entirely natural, for it is from them we derive our hippic inspiration. But the English do not go at all to the solemnity of the Sorbonne, where the Minister will show that we are the first savants of the world, and that the Transit year is one of the most glorious epochs of civilization. These poor old sages seem to imagine that Venus crossed the sun to please them.

Death has let our great men alone during the

past week. We have lost a comedian-sculptor of the Boulevard du Crime, named Mélingue. He was a great gamin of Paris, witty, sarcastic and unexpected, full of deviltry. He led a quiet life in an oasis of Belleville, never caring for the revolutionary volcano always at his door. His wife was of course a comédienne, Mlle. Theodorine. They had long been in love without confessing it, thinking themselves unworthy of each other. It was a comedy within the comedy, for they played lovers on the stage every night. One day a friend said to Mélingue. "Why don't you marry Theodorine?" "With all my heart; but she would not look at me. She plays queens as if she were one." The friend went to see Theodorine. "Would you marry Mélingue?" "He would never think of me, playing kings as he does." The King married the Queen, and they had many children.

Among the Americans in Paris is Mr. Seligmann, a banker of great note in the Bourse. He receives a great deal, gives good dinners and has no enmity to the dance. But he likes a decent interval between the balls. His friends

grew tired of waiting the other day, and this was the result. Coming home from his club at 11 o'clock—with the military punctuality of a family man—he was surprised to see his street filled with carriages. "The neighborhood seems to be lively," he said to himself. Entering his own house he was assailed by a crowd of maskers, who seized him and dragged him into the brilliantly lighted parlors. They complimented him in prose and verse for having given so beautiful a party. He could not believe his senses. They persuaded him that he had sent out his invitations and forgotten it. He took the adventure gayly and entered into the spirit of the affair saying, "You can't imagine how charming it is to give a ball without knowing it." His young daughter, who is lovely as the day, threw herself on his neck and said, "You know happiness comes in dancing."

If you want to know more about it, my dear American readers, you should read a book called *Les Mille et une nuits Parisiennes*. It is brand new, will appear to-morrow and is signed.

ARSENE HOUSSAYE.

A VOYAGE IN THE AIR—VICTOR HUGO'S ROCK—
M. THIERS' BIRTHDAY—THE CHINESE IN NA-
TURE AND THE CHINESE IN FIRE-SCREENS—
SPINDLES AND GILDED PAUNCHES—THE VASE
OF FORTUNY AND THE VASE OF CLOVIS—TWO
WEDDINGS—MR. WASHBURN'S QUADRILLE.

PARIS, April 18, 1875.



RANCE, at this moment, is more oc-
cupied with heaven than with earth.
Two aerial navigators, MM. Croce
Spinelli and Sivel have just paid with their
lives for their attempt against the unknown.
They wished to ascend beyond 8000 meters, but
it appears that the Kingdom of Heaven is re-
served to the gods, and forbidden to man ; hence
two more noble victims of science.

This time we have marked the limits of aerial
geography. A voyage in the clouds is decidedly
more dangerous than one at sea. The Academi-
cians will not fail to compare the two intrepid
explorers to Icarus jealous of Phœbus.

Three started. Happily one of the three returned to write his impressions of the journey. This is M. Tissandier, the chemist, who wanted to pass the sky through his crucible. He noted, minute by minute, the variations of the atmosphere. At 6,000 meters everything went well. At 6,500 meters they breathed with some oppression; their hands were almost frozen. Arriving at about 7,000 meters they were compelled to breathe oxygen. Sivel and Croce closed their eyes, half dead with cold, but they became accustomed to it at last. Even in their distress the three companions were gay. The last word of Croce, who was looking at Tissandier and trying to smile, was, "You blow like a porpoise."

Tissandier at least had strength enough to blow. He still wrote his impressions: "We are at 7,000 meters. Sivel appears lethargic. Sival and Croce are pale, pale, pale; 7,500 meters, Sivel is throwing out ballast." At this terrible moment neither of the three passengers retained his liberty of action; asphyxia had begun. It is by miracle that Tissandier recov-

ered from it. There are many who come back to us from a distance, but none who come from such a height. But I think there is no danger of a crowd of imitators presenting themselves to scale heaven. There is prospect of colonization everywhere, except in the clouds.

Victor Hugo is wiser. He attempts every research of the human spirit with no other balloon and no other ship than his imagination, and for all that he arrives at the zenith. He has, however, recently ventured on a strip of ocean. He has made a trip to Guernsey. There are days when he asks himself whether Paris is not an exile for him, for his house at Guernsey has retained a good part of his heart. It is there that he has written half of his beautiful books. It is there that he has enjoyed the fullest communion with God and nature, with the sky and sea. He calls Guernsey his, "Rock of Saint Helena"—which is rather ambitious. His friend Dumas once said to him, "There is something good on this rock." Dumas was looking at Juliette, the Egeria of Victor Hugo; "Here is a Hudson Lowe with chains of roses."

The old are always young in France. Victor Hugo works with the fire of twenty years at the second series of the "Legends of the Ages." Thiers never rests for an hour. His repose is simply to pass from one work to another. I went yesterday to make my compliment upon his 79th birthday. He was radiant in his circle of friends. Nobody could talk but himself. He once said of Janin, "He has such a habit of writing his feuilleton without thinking about it, that he will still do it when he is dead." One might say of M. Thiers, "He will still be an admirable talker, after having given up the ghost." The Count Apponyi, Ambassador of Austria, came in. Perhaps you may think that they talked politics. Everybody listened, hoping to pick up some word about the mysterious interview at Venice, where the Emperor of Austria went to embrace the King of Italy, in that city which was the finest diamond of his crown. But Count Apponyi and M. Thiers are too diplomatic to touch on that burning question. Can you guess what they talked about? China, Chinese art and Chinese women. Count Apponyi

maintained that Chinese painters were finished workmen rather than artists. M. Thiers took up their defence with all his witty logic. "We must not," he said, "place ourselves at the æsthetic point of view of the Greeks. The Chinese resemble the Greeks in nothing, neither in lines or color. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that their ideal should not be the same. Nature there has an entirely different aspect from European nature. In China, the trees have a foliage which seems artificial in its outlines. The Chinese palaces have no resemblance to the Parthenon. This is why an alien art appears false to us while it may be true, making due allowance for fancy. Fancy is merely the accent of art."

They next spoke of the slenderness of Chinese women, and the corpulence of Chinese men. Why this contrast? It is because the Chinese have singular ideas of the beautiful. They like their women slim and slender, while they think that men ought to occupy a good deal of space in the world, with a fair round belly, the "gilded paunch" of our ancient Farmers-Gen-

eral. Their women, therefore, keep in a condition of poetic leanness, while the men eat desperately to give themselves an exorbitant volume. They cannot get enough of venison steaks, of shark's fins, of bear's feet and swallow's nests. The mandarines cultivate letters, but they cultivate still more their stomachs. It is, therefore, inevitable that the grammar of art in China should represent only slender women and Falstaffian men, and naturally also the painters have made their gods according to the image of man. Their Ninifo is represented sitting on one of his heels, like the baboons and the orang-outangs, with a dropsical circumference. Who was it said that man was made in the image of God? It is man now that makes God in his own image.

M. Thiers asked, with his malicious smile, if it were possible that such monstrosities could be agreeable to their women. "How do these unhappy women, condemned to eternal isolation, regard these superhuman corporosities? Doubtless the Chinaman says to his Chinawoman, 'It is thus that I prove my nobility.' But what

would the Chinawoman say if she could meet a European, graceful as an Apollo or Adonis? Who knows? Perhaps she might find him frightfully lank. So true is it that nothing is absolute. Let us, therefore, respect this venerable paunch since it gains such consideration among the fair of China."

The Chinese Venus was the Empress Takia. She set the fashion of little feet and spindle The. forms fashion became a law. All women wanted to resemble the Empress Takia, and they resembled her only too much. Nothing can now prevent the women from giving themselves up gayly to the martyrdom of the feet. It is not the Chinese who, as M. Thiers said, "take the liberty of their women by the heels." The Chinese poets compare the slow and painful walk of these poor women to the swaying of the willow, agitated by the breeze. But you cannot conceal such a mutilation by the flowers of poetry, or take from it its brutal and dishonoring character.

We shall have in a few days the sale of everything contained in the studio of Fortuny at Rome. He does not leave a cent of ready

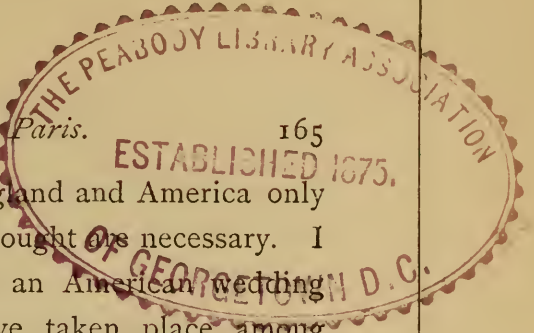
money, but he leaves a fortune in his sketches and curiosities. One single Spanish-moresque vase will bring more than a hundred thousand francs. It is covered with ornaments of metallic lustre. The lower belt is ornamented with arabesques. The next presents cufic characters on a vermiculated ground. The third is ornamented with circular medallions. The fourth contains inscriptions in Neskhi characters on a gilded ground. There is a romantic story about the origin of this vase. Fortuny got it for nothing. It had been concealed in a wall, less on account of its beauty than because it contained a fortune in gold. Three nations already are quarreling over this treasure. Perhaps it may go to America, to your recently opened museum. That reminds me that 1,300 years ago King Clovis coveted an antique vase found in the sack of Rheims. This marvel fell to the lot of a soldier of his army. The soldier, full of his rights as a Sicambrian citizen, would not give up his precious booty to the Prince. It is to be remembered that Soissons was then the capital of France, and this took place there. The King

yielded to the right of the soldier, but later, at a review, he saw that this man was standing out of line, and that his arms were rusty. He clove his head asunder with a blow of his battle-axe, saying to him, "Remember the vase of Soissons!"

We are marrying a good deal here. Mlle. Doucet, daughter of M. Doucet of the Academy, gave her hand and her dowry to M. René Brice of the Assembly. She needed no dowry, for she is very beautiful and very witty, but the portion does no harm, especially in France. There was a pretty ceremony at Sainte Clotilde's, where the whole opera sang. The church and the opera get on agreeably in the 19th century. As M. Camille Doucet has been Director-General of the theatres, there were at the ceremony a great many actors and actresses, so that of course people said, "This is a fine first representation," and the impertinence was carried so far as to add, "The receipts must have been good, for all the places were reserved."

So many formalities are necessary in France to get married that many people end by not

marrying at all. In England and America only 24 hours and a happy thought are necessary. I have just returned from an American wedding which could never have taken place among Frenchmen. The bridegroom arrived at London on Tuesday morning, coming from Chicago. The bride arrived there the same day from Paris. Wednesday evening they were here, married since the morning. It was Miss Downing who married Mr. Harry Spears. She was one of the prettiest brides that we have lately seen. Paris is to lose her because she is to go to Chicago. Happily she has a sister pretty as herself, who swears she will marry in Paris. Mr. and Mrs. Downing inhabit one of the hotels of the Arch of Triumph. They gave a ball on the occasion of their daughter's marriage. The house looked like a conservatory with its masses of floral decoration. Mr. Washburne had a part in it, for I noticed his card on a marvellous bouquet. The house was filled with a gilded multitude. Entering into the saloon we saluted this traveling bride, this pretty blue bird who was about taking flight to build a nest at the other end of



the world. Worth had striven emulously with nature. For so pretty a bride, an extraordinary dress was required.

In the principal quadrille, Mr. Washburne danced with the bride, opposite the bridegroom, who danced with Miss Macdonald. Your Minister dances very well, always preserving the dignity of an Ambassador. Many distinguished Parisians mingled with the full representation of American society. According to the American custom, each one of us received a piece of wedding cake. The sun had replaced the gas-light while the bridesmaids and the groomsmen were still dancing, without perceiving that they had changed luminaries.

A CHINESE SLANDER ON GENTLEMEN—THE IDLENESS OF PRINCES—THE COUNT OF PARIS AND HIS HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA—AN HISTORIAN PAINTER—THE THREE FESTIVITIES OF YESTERDAY—PARADISE AND PARADISE LOST.

PARIS, April 25, 1875.



AN irreverent Chinese philosopher has said that pigs were the only true gentlemen because they did nothing. This Chinese philosopher had not read our books of heraldry, nor eaten truffles, or he would have seen, on the one hand, how the pig works for our happiness, and on the other, that gentlemen are the busiest people in the world, whether making war like Condé, or carrying away women like Richelieu, or working at doing nothing, like some others.

But I wish seriously to defend gentlemen against the attack of this cynical Chinaman. It

is not in vain that it has been said in France, "Noblesse Oblige." Have you not seen, as in 1870, how all the names of ancient France appeared brilliant in the advance guard? But if I defend gentlemen against the charge of idleness, what shall I say of princes? To be a prince nowadays is a hard trade. I do not know one who goes to bed before 1 o'clock, or who rises later than daybreak. To be a prince was easy in the fairy days, when Prince Charming had no other task than to wake the sleeping beauties. But at present a prince is a man, and he must be more than an ordinary man to remain a prince.

Speaking only of princes of the blood-royal or imperial, we have seen them for a hundred years past, taking in their turn their degrees at the University of Exile, whether their names be Bourbon, Orleans or Napoleon. They are obliged to know all languages, for they cannot tell what will be their country of adoption. Some go to England, some to Germany, others to Holland, and others to Italy. You have had Bonapartes and Orleans in America. The Count

of Paris, for instance, gained glory among you and made his exile illustrious. And when princes come home again, in the interludes between revolutions, they cannot fold their arms, whether they return to power, like Napoleon III., or turn soldiers against the common enemy, as the Orleans did in the last invasion. Is there a busier man in the world than Duke of Aumale? Chief of an army corps at a distance from Paris, he is a Parisian to the fingers' ends, which is a business of itself; member of the French Academy, where he never misses a session of importance; President of one of the hardest worked Councils of War, President of the Society of Bibliopolists, President of the Society for the Protection of Animals, member of the National Assembly, and besides all this an historian, as if he had too much time on his hands toward midnight. Certainly this man is no idler.

The Count de Chambord seems to live in the *farniente* of a new Sybaris; but do not trust to appearances. I do not know that he writes history, but he writes innumerable letters. The

number of births that he has saluted, and the number of funeral orations that he has written for his adherents, would fill folios ; and each one of his effusions exhibits his preoccupation in regard to his peculiar God, his peculiar France, his peculiar flag. It is a noble heart that wastes itself in vain, but, from his point of view, he is no less a worker, because he thinks he is working for humanity, and has the consciousness of duty accomplished.

The young Prince Imperial has worked like the first comer at the school of Woolwich at a time when a number of young men, who have no obligations, scatter their energies to the winds. His life is severe and sad ; a grave just closed, a weeping mother, absent friends, a broken dream, and a mirage in the clouds.

The Count of Paris seemed to have led the way for him in this rude school of life. I remember that in 1842 I met at the Tuileries a friend of his father, a celebrated Republican of that day, Godfrey de Cavaignac. We had become acquainted at Madame Corrancez's, a nervous woman who gave dinner parties to men of all

nations, because she liked the hubbub of ideas. Seeing me at a distance, he came to me and said: "Have you heard the news? The Duke of Orleans has been killed by a fall from his carriage. He was a gallant fellow, but this was written up there by the French Republic," and Godfrey de Cavaignac pointed with his finger to heaven, like the church spire of the English poet. He had not much faith in God, but he had great faith in the Republic, and fancied that the shades of Robespierre, Danton, Barrere and Camille Desmoulins presided from above over the destinies of France.

I was very fond of the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, who had been kind towards my first books. I said to Cavaignac that this public misfortune was all the greater if it were written on high because it was a promise of early revolution.

You know the whole story. The Duchess of Orleans devoted herself to her children, to make men of them. All France saluted this great misfortune with respect up to the day when the victors of the insurrection of 1848 refused to

recognize even that courageous mother who had braved all the perils of the street, to present the Count of Paris to the Chamber of Deputies. Lamartine himself was carried away by the cry, "It is too late." The red flag was already floating at the Hotel de Ville. In France, when the people become citizens, the princes go. There is more inclination to shoot them than to make them the first citizens of the nation.

And this is why the Count of Paris, who also wastes no time, is at present one of the best historians of America, and one of the best historians of France. I have seen him at work upon the third and fourth volumes of his history of the civil war in America. He has every right to make his history, because, having become by another revolution, a French citizen, he has also been a citizen of America. He took part in your war, and under his title of Prince signs, "Aide-de-Camp of Gen. McClellan."

He says justly, that at a moment where labor and reflection are the duty of all, no page of military history should be neglected. He relates with gratitude the sympathetic welcome which

he met in the armies of the young Republic. In fact, at 90 years of distance the Americans drew a good augury from the Frenchmen, who came once more to fight with them. America recalled the assistance given by France to the first defender of her independence, and did not fail to place the name Bourbon among those who were to perpetuate his memory in the land. The Count of Paris wished to offer a tribute of recollection to his former companion in arms, but becoming a historian after having been a soldier, in spite of his legitimate preference for the cause which he served, he has forced himself to preserve in his narrative the strictest impartiality. He will soon finish this book, which has so many points of interest for you. It is animated by a rigid sentiment of truth. He is never carried away by passion. He knows that history is a severe Muse, who can only be right by restraining her heart. His style is like his thought, a stream confined in its bed, which neither tears away its banks, nor leaves its limits on stormy days. It flows to the sea in its majestic simplicity, without waves, and without tu-

mult, reflecting both the clouds and the azure of the sky. The Prince follows events, and narrates them without too much commentary, but not without mingling them with philosophic ideas and humane sentiments. He is a good painter, without overloading his pallet with color. Some of his pages, like that of his arrival at Washington, are perfect pictures, which might be signed by Meissonier, or any other of our battle painters. For instance: "While the two hostile armies observed each other between Arlington and Fairfax Court House, a balloon was sent up every evening to reconnoitre the surrounding country. It was the only means of getting sight of the enemy. As soon as we rose above the primeval trees which surrounded the former residence of Gen. Lee, the view extended over an undulating country, covered with trees, dotted here and there by little clearings, and bordered on the west by the long range of the Blue Ridge which recalls the first lines of the Jura. Thanks to the brilliant light which illumines the last hours of an Autumn day in America, the observer could distinguish the slightest details of the

country which appeared below us like a map in relief. But in vain does the eye seek the apparent signs of war. Peace and tranquillity seem to reign everywhere. The greatest attention is necessary to discover the recent clearings, at the edge of which a line of reddish earth marks the new fortifications. However, as the day declines, we see to the south little blueish lines of smoke, rising gently above the trees. They multiply by groups and form a vast semicircle. It is the Confederates cooking their supper. You may almost count the roll of their army, for every smoke betrays the kettle of a half section, Farther off, the steam of a locomotive flying towards the mountain, traces by a line drawn through the forests the railroad which brings the enemy their provisions. At the same moment a strain of military music is heard below the balloon. All the clearings where we sought in vain to discover the Federal camp, are filled by a throng coming out of the wood that surrounds them. This throng arranges itself, and forms in battalions. The music passes in front of the ranks with that peculiar

march which the English call the 'goose-step.' Each battalion has two flags, one with the National colors, and the other with its number and the arms of its State. These flags are dipped, the officers salute, the Colonel takes command, and, a moment after, all the soldiers disperse; for it is not an alarm nor a prelude of a march forward which has brought them thus together, but the regular evening parade."

Is not this a picture from the hand of a master? Many like it I could set before you, but the book is too well known in America for me to make further extracts. Rivarol said, "The word is the clothing of the thought, and the expression is its armor." The Count of Paris finds both word and expression so naturally that he seems never to have searched for it. Rivarol said, also, that the writer can gain recruits among soldiers, and that the general can never gain recruits among writers. As a rule, therefore, all the generals are becoming writers. In times of peace the sword turns to a pen in their hands.

Yesterday there was a princely fête at the house of a brother of the Count of Paris, the Duke of Chartres, a Turkish fête at the Embassy, and an American fête at Mr. Stebbins's. The guests were about the same at each, so that the same people were meeting everywhere. For instance, I saw three times one of your Generals, Gen. Sickles, his handsome wife, and his pretty daughter. When one bears the insignia of beauty, like these two ladies, and the insignia of bravery, like Gen. Sickles, one cannot be seen too often, being escorted everywhere by universal sympathy. At the Turkish Embassy I heard a word which did not fall on deaf ears. A young woman was there who had dissappeared from the world to mourn in a convent over the sins of her husband, as it was given out, but who also might have devoted a little time to mourning over her own, a lady usually called "the honeymoon woman." Virtue is like beauty—you cannot see where it begins or where it ends.

"I did not think," said an evil tongue, "that Madame A. B. C. would indulge herself in the

luxury of a convent before making her re-entry in the world." A still more evil tongue answered, "What would you have? A woman would not care to go to Paradise except for the pleasure of descending to Paradise Lost."



THE ART OF LIVING 100 YEARS—COUNT WALDECK
—FONTENELLE AND FLOURENS—AN IRRE-
SISTIBLE AT 83—A TOAST AT MADAME LOPEZ'
—AN EPITAPH—RECREATIONS OF A CENTEN-
ARIAN—SALON OF 1875—INITIALS OF GENIUS.

PARIS, May 2, 1875.



O you ever take the trouble to live 100 years in America? In Europe there are always a few obstinate fellows who persistently refuse to be buried. M. de Fontenelle of illustrious memory, who always had his hands full of truths, and took good care not to open them ; whose eminently French wit was free from any taint of the Gaulish,—M. Fontenelle, in short, died a few hours before completing his hundredth year. When imbeciles asked him his age he would say, "Hush ! Death has forgotten me !"

But Fontenelle has been left far behind. People in society in Paris received yesterday the following notice :

“You are requested to assist at the funeral of M. Jean Frederick Maximilian Count Waldeck, officer of the Order of Genius and Merit of Venezuela, honorary member of the London Athenæum, member of the Geographical Society of Paris, member of the American Society of Archæology, Honorary Vice-President of the Universal Alliance, and author of several works, who has died in his 110th year, furnished with the sacraments of the church at his house, No. 74 Rue des Martyrs.”

Since Count Waldeck, who had been successively page of Marie Antoinette, soldier of the Republic and of the Empire, prisoner of Cannibals, ranger in virgin forests, explorer of American ruins, three times shipwrecked, left for dead in a duel, smitten by fevers of all colors—white, yellow, green, and blue; married, also, when 83 years of age,—since he had neglected so many chances of dying, one cannot help asking how he came to die? M. Flourens, who occupied in the Academy the seat of M. de Fontenelle, was himself ambitious to live a hundred years. It was he who invented “the third youth,” beginning

at 60 years, which we call "St. Martin's Summer." He published a learned book to prove that a man never dies, but commits suicide, whatever his age may be. Count Waldeck, therefore, must have killed himself, for he had no more reason to die this spring than last spring. On the contrary, he felt himself in better trim. Death seized him, pencil in hand. On the fatal day, he rose as usual at 5 o'clock in the morning. He said that he had ten years of work on hand, and did not wish to lose an hour.

I met him some ten years ago. The minister had asked me if his archæological discoveries were serious. I went, as Inspector-General of Fine Arts, to see this monument of another age. I found that this page of Marie Antoinette still possessed all the impetuosity of the French Guard. I lost sight of him afterwards ; but a month ago I met him again at dinner at the house of a charming and eccentric Irishwoman, known here under the name of the *Maréchale Lope*. I had Count Waldeck in front of me ; I sat between his wife and his son. As this young gentleman was about 24 years old, I supposed that

it was a step-son, and scarcely knew on what ground I was standing while chatting with his wife, an English lady of great beauty and distinction. At last I took the bull by the horns. "Madame," I said, "you made a heroic sacrifice in devoting yourself to this gallant gentleman of another century."

"No," she said, "he is not of my century, for we fêted his hundredth birthday nine years ago ; but he is of my age, because I love him."

"I never doubted, Madame, your love for M. de Waldeck. I love him too, as one would love the eighth wonder of the world."

"I understand you, sir ; but I love him as a woman loves her husband. I do not count his years. I have trouble in believing that he is 109, and I am only 42."

"Pardon the curiosity of a philosopher whose study is woman. Permit me to place an interrogation point before your heart. Did you love him at 83 because he was a gentleman in spirit as well as birth, or did you love him from love?"

"I loved him from love. I was at that time somewhat in demand. If among all my suitors,

I chose Count Waldeck, it was because I found him the most irresistible." Here is something to console those who are entering M. Flourens' "Third Youth."

"And why, Madame, was he the most irresistible?"

"Because he was the youngest. He was not 80 years of age. He was 20 four times over."

At this moment Count Waldeck rose, took with a firm hand a glass of champagne, and improvised a pretty stanza in honor of Madame Lopez. After which he emptied his glass at a breath, without winking. When it was empty he turned it upside down on the hand of the *Maréchale*, and kissed away the last pearly drop.

"That," he said, "is what we did at the court of Louis XVI."

Nothing could have been more gallant and gentlemanlike.

I proposed a toast in my turn to this living history of a century, to this man who had seen and judged everything. After dinner we had a long conversation. He spoke of the future as of the past, as if he had only gone half way as yet.

He talked of doing this and doing that. "And still how much," he said, "must be left unfinished." He related unpublished witticisms of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. He said he was present when Rivarol, after the taking of the Bastille, was summoned by the King, who wanted every one's advice. "Sire," said Rivarol, "my advice is very simple. If you wish to remain King of France, act the King!"

Louis XVI. did not act the King, and instead of mounting his throne again he mounted the scaffold.

This was the last time that Count Waldeck dined out. After that memorable evening he never again left his apartment—on a fifth floor in the Rue des Martyrs—until he left it yesterday for eternity. To-day, all the old men are out of patience with him, and are accusing him of having been criminally imprudent. They propose as an epitaph to be engraved on his tombstone, "Here lies one who died at a hundred and ten for having lived too fast."

His wife is in despair—noble woman and brave heart. But after all, since she married the

Eighteenth Century, perhaps she will console herself by marrying the Twentieth.

This singular man lived solitary and deserted. The government which supported him did it very ill. Historians preferred to ransack libraries rather than this voluminous life. Savans rushed to observe the transit of Venus, but did not care to take the trouble to go to the Rue des Martyrs to study these 110 years living together. Yet Count Waldeck always was cheery and presentable. He was born at Prague, in the autumn of 1766. He began as a page to Marie Antoinette. But the court of Louis XVI. was a prison to that adventurous spirit. He went to travelling over the world at a time when one did not travel fast. He returned to Paris, and entered the studio of David, which he left for the studio of Prud'hon. But the smell of powder turned his head. We find him at the siege of Toulon, and in the campaign of Italy. He went with the French army to Egypt. But he refused to be included in the capitulation. He, with four other officers, resolved to escape through Africa. He crossed with them the desert of Dongola, where his com-

panions were eaten. He was reserved for dessert, but melted the hearts of his captors with opera airs. One would have thought that he would be ready to return to his studio ; but he embarked for Chili with the Portuguese. He was for a long time a resident of South America, a devoted archæologist, digging everywhere, and discovering important monuments which prove that America has also her antiquity. He made no money in all these adventures. He went to London, afterwards to Paris, inventing a new trade which was almost an art—the art of touching up old engravings or etchings, Marc Antonys or Rembrandts. He gave them back their freshness and brilliancy by force of incredible patience. This turbulent man resigned himself to passing twelve hours a day over an old print retracing by the aid of a microscope all its worn outlines with a crow's quill. It was wonderful, how out of a three-franc print he would restore a 3000-franc masterpiece. There are few celebrated collections which do not contain engravings retouched by Count Waldeck. He tried painting, but his pictures were never worth his prints, be-

cause there was nothing to retouch. He exposed ten years ago two pictures which were much remarked, because he had inscribed on the frames these words, beyond the reach of most artists, "Recreations of a Centenarian."

Since we are talking about pictures, let us look in a moment at the Salon. Naturally as it is a first representation we find ourselves in excellent company. All the queens of fashion are there distracting attention from the fashionable painters. The question is which makes the best figure. In passing I salute the lovely Marquise Anforti, and ask if her portrait is at the Salon. "Never," she replies, "who could paint me as well as I do myself?" "I know," I replied, "that you deserve the first prize of painting, but there are at least four painters who are worthy of making your portrait, Cabanel, Carolus Duran, Cot, and Verhas."

"Very well. I will engage all four for next year, but do not say anything about it; for they ought not to know there are four hands in the game. I will send the three first to the Exposition under three assumed names and you will

see that there is no resemblance amongst them. You swear secrecy?"

I swore, and I ask your help to keep the secret.

The Exposition of 1875 contains the farewells of Corot; three admirable landscapes, "The Woodman," "Pleasures of Evening," and a Scriptural scene. He has the profound sentiment for nature which Leonardo da Vinci had for the human face. It is the infinite in the obscure. One must view his work with the eyes of the soul.

The Palace of Fine Arts is divided into 24 halls by the 24 letters of the alphabet. The letter A will only detain us by a fine figure of Alma Tadéma, "Painting;" great character and elevation, true individuality of color and design. In the room B, a fine Bible piece by a foreigner, "Rizpah Guarding her Children;" A Holy Family of Bouguereau, not so strong in color as in feeling; a magnificent peasant scene of Jules Breton, "The Feast of St. John;" one of the three fine portraits of the Salon by Bounat, the portrait of Madame Pasca, an actress

who has just returned from Russia, who will be in six months our greatest actress. In the room C, I have already spoken of Corot. Cabanel comes next with his three portraits more or less like, Venus, Tamar, and an anonymous Baroness ; Carolus Duran with his "End of Summer," a wonderful piece of poetry for which he refuses 50,000 francs ; then Chaplin with his "Broken Lyre" and "May Roses," different tone, but none the less charming. The portraits of Cot are marked with great distinction. He seems to have lived only with Duchesses. You will meet Manon Lescaut in America, for I see her here embarking with the rest of the girls in a picture of M. Delort. Let us not leave the C's without taking a breath in these landscapes of Cesar de Kock. To-day the leading initial in art is C. David used to say in speaking of his pupils, "All are marked with the initial of Genius." They were named Gros, Girodet, Gérard, Guérin, and Géricault. We still have our Gérôme, but that is about all, except Giacometti and Girard.

Passing on to M, we find the famous Manet among the vines of Argenteuil. Manet would

have been glad to be Fortuny, but Fortuny would never have consented to be Manet. And yet I like this original painter better than all the dried fruit of the Roman school. Here is Mazerolles with his decorative panels ; the Hungarian Muncascy with his "Village Heroes," and Matedko with a "Baptism of Bells at Cracow ;" Muller with the "Madness of Lear ;" Maillard with "Achilles and Thetis." A smell of powder attracts us into the next room, where we find two admirable battle-pieces of M. de Neuville. After these master works we must pause before the "Spring" of Parrot, a "Fisher's Family," by Puvis de Chavannes, "A Bather," by Perrault, an adorable portrait of Mlle. Chanzy de Pomayrac. Here is a "Norman Cabaret," by Ribot, which smells more of wine than of cider ; "The Ant and the Grasshopper" by Vivert, "The Broken Pitcher," by Verhas.

This ends the alphabet. Verhas is a Flemish painter who now sells his pictures to the English at his own prices. Ten years ago I was walking in a by-street in Paris. I asked the price of a little picture in a window representing a young woman

weeping and kissing a little dog. Her lover was gone but her dog remained and she called him Fidèle—a hackneyed subject certainly. I do not like that sort of thing, but the painting was very pretty. “How much?” I asked. “Fifty francs.” How can a man of talent sell such pictures at such a price? Send it to me.” The next day my valet, who always cripples a name when he can, announced M. Féroce. It was Verhas. I said, “I owe you 500 francs for your picture.” “No,” he replied, I choose to sell it at 50.” “Don’t insist,” I said; “I make a good bargain at that—the picture is worth 1000 francs.”

Féroce remained five years with me painting ceilings and portraits. He was “faithful” as the dog he had painted, but the laziest fellow in the world. Now he has his own house in Brussels, but is as lazy as ever. He gets up as late to earn his 300 francs a day as he did formerly to earn three francs.

THE EXPOSITION OF 1875—PROUDHON—AN ESCAPED LUNATIC—THE RESULTS OF PHILOSOPHY—SOCIALSIT PRINCIPLES—MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE—SOCRATES AND XANTIPPE.

PARIS, May 9, 1875.



IN connection with the Exposition of 1875, which gives rise to so many absurd paradoxes about Art, its aims and its destinies, I remember a book of the apostle Proudhon, an unfortunate philosopher who must not be confounded with our admirable Neo-Grecian, Peter Paul Prud'hon, the painter of poets and the poet of painters.

It is hard to conceive follies that have been uttered by the philosopher Proudhon under the pretext that philosophy is akin to wisdom. He wrote 400 pages entitled "The Principle of Art." Can you imagine what is the principle of this celebrated cloud-collector? It is simply that Art should be suppressed. But Plato invented that before him. It is true that sagacious spirits who go to the bottom of things say that though Plato

banished artists from his Republic, it was because they would have been miserable there ; a fraternal idea, as you see, because Plato was the first artist in eloquence of his time.

Victor Hugo said in 1850, "Do you know what the Socialists would do if they could? They would tear down the Vendôme Column to make pennies of it." In his book on Art Proudhon does not conceal his profession of faith. Listen: "I would give the Museum of the Louvre, the Tuileries, Notre Dame, and the Column into the bargain, to be lodged at home in a little house which I should occupy by myself, in the centre of an enclosure of a thousand yards, where I might have water, shade, grass, and silence." It was for this, then, that he made such a disturbance, this inheritor of the pride of J. J. Rousseau. If this little house is his ideal, what becomes of his famous thesis, "Property is theft?" Contradiction of contradictions. The ideal of Proudhon in Art is a little house where he shall live all alone ; and he adds that he shall take care to put in it no statues nor pictures. Now, who hindered him from having this little

house? In his country that would not have cost much. Armand Barthet, the author of "Lesbia's Sparrow," wiser than the philosopher because he was a poet, bought himself a little house there for three or four thousand francs. But everybody knows that the citizen Proudhon, who was for ever singing the joys of silence, would only live in a continual row.

You cannot imagine what stupidities this book of Proudhon contains. Here is another, "Art has done nothing for the Greeks, the Italians, the Spaniards. We must measure the degree of abasement among a people by the exaggeration of its works of art. It has been the secret of priests and despots to cheat the poverty of the masses by the prestige of monuments. Could the Egyptian complain while he saw rising around him those obelisks, those sphinxes, those pyramids, those gigantic temples? When Art seizes upon the Greeks they are lost. The Romans call them only *Grecillons* as the Belgians call us *Francequillons*. As soon as the great monuments begin to rise in Rome nothing is left but corruption and degeneracy."

You think perhaps that this escaped lunatic could go no further in the domain of Art. Then read these lines: "Would to God that Luther had exterminated the Raphaels, the Michael Angelos, and all their rivals, all those decorators of palaces and churches, natural allies of priesthood and despotism against the liberty of the people, ministers of corruption, professors of pleasure, the agents of luxury; it is they who have taught the people to endure their ignominy and their indigence by the contemplation of their achievements." Proudhon does not stop there; he further says to the artists that through them we have found means to live in proud pauperism. He rages against glory, having enjoyed nothing but notoriety. "Glory!" he says; "this is our daily bread—the daily bread of vain and cowardly races who, after shining for a moment in the front rank, become the derision of nations." The motive of all this wrath in a book which ought to preserve always the sentiment of dignity, since Art is the school of the beautiful and the good, is that in Proudhon's opinion, his gossip Courbet

is not yet recognized as the first painter of the Nineteenth Century.

To Proudhon what are De la Croix and Ingres, those masters of colors and design, those fine intelligences controlled by the religion of Art? They are nothing but slaves of despotism and virtuosos of the priesthood. In like manner, we French are nothing but France-quillons, since the Belgians, from the height of their dignity have said so. Doubtless Proudhon thought that the Belgians (I do not speak of Rubens, who is universal) surpassed us by their little pictures. Yet Louis XIV. royally said, looking at some Teniers, "Take these frightful clowns away." This meant "I like only grand art."

At page 374 of his book Proudhon declares that the marvels predicted by Fourier will one day be realized. "The true monuments of the Republic in contradistinction to those of the Empire will be in the convenience, the salubrity, and the cheapness of its habitations." M. Proudhon, you came into the world poor. You have said that property is theft because you had

not the courage to buy the three acres of Plato. You have regarded the beauties of nature without understanding them, and hence you have decreed the uselessness of God. You have regarded the masterpieces of Art with an eye of envy that you could not possess them or imitate them, and you have decreed the uselessness of Art. Wishing to be famous, you would burn the Alexandrian library. You may be consoled in your tomb, since your gossip Courbet has overthrown the Vendôme Column, and your friends, the Socialists, have burned the library of the Louvre. You need not be afraid that any one will ever take the trouble to burn your book. If your congeners ever come to power they may, according to your wish, burn Homer and Raphael, the Vatican and Notre Dame de Paris, everything grand or beautiful which remains on earth. But I am sorry for you, M. Proudhon. They can burn neither the blue sky nor the golden stars. The sun will still light up their folly, and the roses and the nightingales, those poems of the greatest of Artists, will laugh to scorn eternally the man who would try to suppress poetry in the

world. It was an earlier Proudhon who said to the nightingale, "Ugly beast? I cannot sleep for your chattering."

Fortunately nobody reads Proudhon, and we still go to the exhibitions of pictures as people went in the morning of Art. It is now 200 years since France began to enjoy this spectacle, as the first exhibition took place in 1673. In spite of the fact that M. Courbet no longer exhibits, people still go to meditate or laugh at the developments of French painting. Whatever M. Proudhon may say, it is better to attend this school than his. Painting and sculpture should be our best books now that we have no longer time to read. They have this advantage, that they speak to every one, and that their eloquence is immediate. You must spend a long time at college to understand Virgil; you must be initiated before you can comprehend Beethoven; but any one with eyes needs only remain an hour before Michael Angelo or Raphael, even if he cannot read, to attain feelings of the beautiful and the true. Poets and musicians address the elect; sculptors and painters hold plenary court for all who see.

Would you believe it? Even in this festival time of nature there still are fêtes in society, but it is the extreme unction of the winter's pleasures. Madame Ratazzi, who has allowed her portrait and that of Ratazzi to be exhibited at the Palace of the Champs Elysées—a third-rate picture where the husband and wife seem to be waiting for a prize of virtue—is to give, on Saturday, a ball by daylight, in her house in the Avenue de l'Impératrice. It will be called a Festival of Flowers; unfortunately there will be too many faded bouquets. All this week has been filled with cotillons of the well-known sort. In the American society, pretty women who think themselves still prettier when their dresses drag out of sight; in the official world, faces dark with ridiculous gravity; in the Parisian world, beauty, ribbons, and deviltry.

There are always a great many marriages here, and a great many separations. Madeleine Brohan said of one of her friends, "I shall not believe she is married until I hear of her separation." It was another actress who wrote this famous note: "Monsieur, you ask my hand.

What for? I am not so silly as to marry a man who has the folly to wish to marry me. Let us not join hands, but shake hands." In France they say the separation is a sufficient remedy for marriage. Some desire divorce so as to marry again ; but most people say that one marriage is a plenty. We have a prince in Paris who repaired his fortune by marrying with a bank, and who was recently on the point of sending his wife back to his father-in-law. But he contented himself by sending him, as a first warning, a telegraphic dispatch containing this sentiment from Socrates: "Marriage is honey and aloes. How comes it that the woman wastes the honey till nothing remains on her lips and those of her husband but the bitterness of the aloes?" Although the father-in-law, one of our richest financiers, was well convinced that he had not given a Xantippe to the prince, and although he was not very strong in Greek, he understood this translation of Socrates. He answered his heraldic son-in-law by a dispatch that he had made for him 300,000 francs in the recent panic at the Bourse. This greatly sweetened the bitter-

ness of the aloes. The financier consoles himself for the scandal by the magic phrase, "Our daughter, the princess."

Mirès also wanted his daughter to be princess. He gave several millions for that purpose to Prince Polignac. Where did he get them? Almost everywhere ; of me, for instance, exactly as if he had picked my pocket. When I said to Princess Polignac, "Do you pay your father's debts?" she burst into a loud laugh. These princes who marry bankers' dowries are not worth much ; but these princesses are worth still less. But bad blood will tell.

Speaking of panics, I mentioned the fortune made by my friend Georges de Heeckeren. He made four millions in four weeks. He has just lost them in two. But he had the time to give away money by the handful to all his needy friends. This, at least, still is his.

THE ACADEMY DUEL—LEMOINNE AND PARADOL
—THE ACADEMY A POLITICAL INSTITUTION—
THE TWO DUMAS—AN EXOTIC PRINCESS—
ELOISE AND ABELARD—A RADICAL ARCHITECT.

PARIS, June 16, 1875.



HERE has just been a duel at the Academy. People said, even in the eighteenth century, "The French Academy is an illustrious company where they receive men of the sword, men of the church, men of the law, men of the world—and even men of letters." At present the Academy is an illustrious company where they receive nothing but politicians. Therefore, before the duel of which I am speaking, the Academy had given the chair of Jules Janin to M. John Lemoinne, an editor of the *Journal des Débats*, a courteous gentleman, who will recall under the cupola of the Institute, the appearance and the wit of Prevost-Paradol, who was Minister of France among you. Rivarol, who was not an Academi-

cian, said, "To be one of the Forty, you must have done nothing;" but he added, "You must not carry this too far." M. John Lemoinne has made no books, but he has fought valiantly against darkness and prejudice. I give him my vote. My son, who is also an editor of the *Débats*, assures me that he was the only candidate worthy of the chair. This is what is called preaching for one's saint. But for the chair of M. Guizot, there was a real duel in four combats. On the one side the Republic, on the other the Empire and Orleanism; M. Jules Simon, formerly Minister of Public Instruction under the Governments of the 4th September, and of M. Thiers, and M. Dumas, Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Sciences and Senator of the Empire. The struggle was very hot. Each required only one vote to pass to the Immortality of the Quarantaine. If M. Dumas had not had Alexandre Dumas against him, he would have been safe enough; but the author of "The Demi Monde" thought that there were enough Dumas' there already. The duel is postponed for six months. About that time—for things do

not go rapidly at the Academy—M. Lemoinne will have had his green embroidered coat made. People will say, of course “*L’habit ne fait pas Lemoinne.*” His rivals have already said that he had better put on a harlequin’s coat to represent the different opinions which he has defended.

For six months to come I shall not say another word about the Academy, but I will soon send you the twelfth edition of my history of “The Forty-first Chair.” The forty-first chair, rendered illustrious by Descartes, Pascal, Molière, J. J. Rousseau, Diderot, Beaumarchais, Le Sage, Balzac, and Théophile Gautier, is the only one I desire. I have never taken a step towards any of the others, though it has been mistakenly said that I have been a candidate.

The salons soon will close. Mme. Ratazzi gave to-day a fête which was called Venetienne, because there was nothing like Venice about it—no gondolas, no doges, no dogaresses. The water of the lagoons was advantageously replaced by champagne. The enjoyment seemed to be endless, for it began at noon, and at mid-

night, while I write, the tableaux are still in progress. It is not everybody that is gay in France. A good many are thoughtful, and disquieted about the digestion of M. de Bismarck. War has spread over us lately its great vengeful shadow, but it was nothing but shadow.

There are salons in Parisian society where there is no dancing, but where there is an endless gratification of all the curiosities of the heart and the mind. There has recently been a good deal of talk about an exotic Princess who has held hospitable court in the Champs Elysées. I will not tell you of the country of this great lady; she may be a Russian or Wallachian or Italian. She is so fantastic that public opinion has no existence for her; she laughs it out of countenance. She and a friend of hers, also a little too fanciful, live together in a circle of women, something too witty, who make a joke of everything. Men are apt to imagine that a woman who laughs is disarmed. It is just the other way. Mockery is the best armor against love. What ruins women is aspiration, revery, sentimentality. A woman who never

laughs is half lost, if she is not defended by the cradle of her children. To know something of this, it would only be necessary to visit this Princess, who, although a bird of passage, is far more Parisian than most of the bourgeois who were born in Paris. You could not count the number of fops entrapped in that hornet's nest of the Princess's salon. Her receptions are twice a day—at four o'clock, before starting for the Bois, and at midnight, after returning from the opera, or the balls of the evening. After being bored everywhere else, people go there to spend a pleasant half hour. The snobs and the imbeciles, who are always found together, but who are not necessarily of the same ways, are not permanent at this house. She makes no objections to receiving them, knowing they will never take root. It is amusing to see them go. It is a comedy to watch a swell of feeble mind who wants to go home and dares not ; who beats his brains for a witty word, and does not find it ; who drops at the same moment his silly remark and his crush hat ; who backs against a closed door and misses an open one.

The Duke de Morny, Leon Gozlan and I, once tried to put this comedy on the stage at the Français. We called it "Madame's Mondays." M. Fould, the Minister of State, did not approve it. He hated Morny, and interdicted the piece. We had a gay revenge. M. Fould went driving with the Emperor the day before his dismissal from the Ministry. So we framed a couplet, which stated that "Yesterday M. Fould was driven out in company with the Emperor, and to-day he was driven out by himself."

All Paris passes through the salons of the Princess, but her circle remains essentially the same, because the new-comers rarely return. There is plenty of wit ; "too much of it," one of the Fortys said one day ; "it is scattered so liberally that you think it paste until you find it is diamonds." The Princess answered : "Never mind ! Throw as many stones as you please in my garden. But let them be precious stones."

Plato banished poets from his republic, and the Princess banishes politicians from hers. She says that politics, which were invented to arrange everything, derange everything ; that with

their pretext of humanity they only exist by virtue of scaffolds, pillage, and conflagrations. Her programme for the happiness of the people is not voluminous: "God up there, a sergeant and four gendarmes down here." Girardin, who is one of her friends, gave in his adhesion to this constitution on condition that it be extended to half a stickful.

I shall not tell you all the charming absurdities invented by these ladies. They are very engaging, from their beauty and their lack of prudery. One is tempted to gild friendship with the rays of love. "Go on," they seem to say. But when you have come into the depths of the forest they leave you there, with a perfectly feminine cruelty, wounded to death perhaps with a blow from a fan. And how can you avoid being caught, when you are at first accompanied with such luxurious abandon? When your songs of love are listened to, and sweet voices join in the refrain? When they march with even step beside you towards the enchanted castle, without warning you that the castle will bury you under the laughter of mocking fairies?

The River du Tendre has long been famous. The Princess and her friends are neither *Précieuses* nor ridiculous. They speak the picturesque and vivid French of the modern grammar. They live like other people, without aiming to be either prudes or blue-stockings. You dine well at the Princess's; witty as she is, she never substitutes an anecdote for the roast, like *Mme. de Maintenon*, who got her education in a bourgeois kitchen.

We have, as you know, at *Père la Chaise* the tomb of *Abélard* and *Héloïse*, which is an eternal shrine for lovers, and those who love the Past. It was proposed to restore this tomb, which was not originally made to contain the remains of these historic lovers, because it was formed from the ruins of a chapel at *St. Denis*. But as they were about to vote a credit of 13,000 francs for this purpose, *M. Viollet-Leduc*, now a radical municipal councillor, cried out: "What is the use? It is a spurious monument." This is not the sentiment of a true architect. Why should we allow the destruction of the relics of a consecrated chapel, whose style has been ap-

preciated by the world? If it is not the true grave of Héloïse and Abélard, it is at least a page of the history of art. The radical architect said also, "This chapel is a mystification. The people ought not to be deceived." To-morrow he may say that Notre Dame de Paris, his dear Notre Dame of other days, when he believed in the Virgin, is a mystification, and ought to go to ruin. For Heaven's sake let us leave architects to their architecture, and not make politicians of them. It was an artist also, M. Courbet, who decreed the fall of the Vendôme Column. It fell, but the national sentiment quickly raised it again. M. Viollet-Leduc wants the statue of Héloïse destroyed because it does not represent Héloïse. How does he know that? And what does it matter, since for a century past that statute has been revered as one of the most touching of legendary figures?

While M. Viollet-Leduc turns politician I shall turn architect. I am going to rebuild in the Avenue du Roi de Rome the palace of Queen Isabel of Spain; I shall take out no commission for the purpose, however, except

that of Her Majesty, who is a woman of the best taste.

I will end with two amiable speeches of our ladies of the theatre. Madame Plessis, of the French Comedy, famous for forty years, has a wrinkle, nothing more than a crease in a rose-leaf, but, after all, it is a crease. Her not less famous friend, Madeleine Brohan, who has the advantage of a fame of only twenty years' standing, has recently quarrelled with her. At some disobliging innovation of the elder actress, Madame Brohan said the other day, "That is a new wrinkle, and it does not become you!"

This is the other amenity. You know the phenomenal thinness of Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt. She was talking with Mlle. Croizette, a maid-servant of Molière, who would make a dozen of her, and said she would like to go to America, like Rachel, if she were not afraid of shipwreck.

"Do not fear," said her fat friend, "You would be your own plank of safety."

A FUTURE SENATOR—ALPHONSE ESQUIROS—POET
AND POLITICIAN—CONDEMNED TO DEATH—
WORKING THE ORACLE—LEGITIMISM THE SLEEP-
ING BEAUTY—WHO IS PRINCE CHARMING ?

PARIS, May 23, 1875.



WE deplore our friends laid away in the grave, but we forget those who are still above ground. For instance, this morning I saw pass by with a deep feeling of sadness the pale faces of Théophile Gautier, Gérard de Nerval and Jules Janin, when a servant announced Alphonse Esquiros, another friend of my youth, whom I had not seen since the last revolution. The fame of Alphonse Esquiros must have passed the ocean in prose and verse. At present he is a Deputy of the people. When we first met at Victor Hugo's he was a romantic poet. He began with a collection of odes and sonnets, entitled "The Swallows." The name gives an idea of the dreams of poets. Do not they, like the swallows, forever seek the Spring? Do they not journey wherever

the light invites them—the light which is the image of absolute and eternal beauty? There were admirable verses in this first collection, but the one most remarked was this :

“The moon a silver crown, the sun a louis d’or.”

This line went over the world chiming the glory of the young poet, as a good verse doubtless would not have done. Has not a philosopher said that we are better known by our vices than our virtues?

Alphonse Esquiros belonged to our early Bohemia, the gilded Bohemia. He left it to go into politics, but often regretted that he could not share our truancy. It was at this time that he wrote in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* his fine studies of Paris, less true, it may be, but more philosophical than those of M. Maxime du Camp. It was the time when Lamartine was publishing “The Girondists,” and Esquiros published “the Montagnards” with all the audacity of a Danton. In 1848 also he threw himself with enthusiasm into the most reckless extravagances. It so happened that one day he was condemned

to death by default. He had taken refuge with me. Victor Hugo and Ledru Rollin warned him not to show his head at the window. Although the cage was a gilded one, the Swallow could not help going out. I foresaw that he would be caught some day in the net of a court-martial, which would not act by default. I knew that the public prosecutor, Col. Hennezel, was one of my habitual readers. I went straight to him. "I will deliver Esquiros to you," I said, "on condition that you will abandon the charges against him." "Abandon the charges," said the Colonel, "I would rather stop reading you." I bowed. "Think," I said, "Esquiros is one of the most gallant fellows in the world. What has got him into trouble is his love for humanity. You ought not to shoot such hearts." We were smoking our cigars. We were from the same country ; we had hunted together, and we had taken part in theatricals at a château of the Soissonnais. "Besides, my dear Colonel," I said, "Esquiros is going to expatriate himself, and we shall thus lose a man of talent." "We shall not let him go." "But he has shaved his beard,

you would never know him." "I know where he is." "Where?" "At your house." "Why don't you take him, then?" "Because he is at your house—if he were with a demagogue it would soon be done."

I saw that the case must go into court and arranged with the prosecutor to retain a friend of his, Nogeat St. Laurent, with no other fee except the honor and glory of saving the life of a politician. The charges were not to be abandoned at once, but the prosecutor would admit extenuating circumstances. I went home, and taking Esquiros by the arm I conducted him to the military prison. It was a bitter moment when I saw him go down to his cell and heard the heavy iron gate close behind him. I began to believe that Victor Hugo and Ledru Rollin were right in advising him to remain concealed. In those troubled times who could answer for the court?

"Let me say one more word to the prisoner," I said to the turnkey. He opened the grating again. I threw myself into the arms of Esquiros. "You shall be saved," I cried, and hurried away to the President of the court-martial, Gen.

Cornemuse, a singular name for such a mission. Soldiers are usually good fellows whose hearts are ever on duty. This one did not want to listen to me. But he gave me a cigar and ended by making me stay to breakfast. I never breakfasted more joyously, for I felt that I had gained my case. And in fact a week later Esquiros appeared before the court-martial. I was in the crowd and the President sent a gendarmes to bring me to sit beside him. But all was not yet over. They examined Esquiros. Instead of being prudent in his answers, he went to developing his theories *à la* St. Just. "What is a man? Nothing. What is a principle? Everything." They might perfectly easily have condemned him to death by the same argument. "What is a principle? Everything. What is a man? Nothing." They wanted not to convict him, but it was hard work. The prosecutor had abandoned his accusations, but the prisoner accused himself. I was in a fever. When he was acquitted everybody was astounded, except the officers of the court-martial.

Do you know what was the first word of Esqui-

ros in embracing me? “*Vive la République!*” they dared not condemn my ideas.” Since that great day the life of Esquiros has been agitated. He was elected representative of the people at Paris up to the 2d of December, day of deliverance according to some, day of oppression according to others. Of course Esquiros appeared at the barricades, where he was willing to die for his ideas. He was proscribed. He wandered in Belgium, in Holland, in England, where he almost became an English citizen, having been appointed at London Inspector of High Schools. From Holland, and from England, he sent to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* admirable letters on the institutions and manners of these two countries. He is still a sort of Englishman, although a representative of the French people, and gladly crosses the Channel at every Parliamentary recess.

There is nothing but fortune and misfortune in this world. Esquiros had an ill-natured wife in Paris, who did not think proper to go abroad with him after the *coup d'état*. Therefore, Esquiros thought proper to marry, in Belgium, another wife,

a beautiful and noble creature, a living model of virtue, resignation, and devotion. Although the other one is still living, it is the latter, the wife of exile, who is called Madame Esquiros.

I was just now speaking of St. Just. Esquiros is St. Just in 1875. I saved Esquiros, although he was not of my opinion. I am not sure that Esquiros would not have had me shot if I had been taken in arms against his ideas. Like the terrible Conventionnel, he has a head at once gentle and proud; a head like an antique marble, where meditation reigns. If men return after their death, there is no doubt that St. Just is to-day called Esquiros. Both began with poetry, to end with politics. Both desired to make France over in the image of Sparta. I will tell you one word of Esquiros which will give you an idea of the simplicity of the man. It was at his first marriage, where I assisted as best man. We had more fine phrases than ortolans for supper. At 11 o'clock Esquiros remembered that he always went to bed before midnight. He said adieu to all of us, even his wife. Yes, he said adieu to his wife as to the others. She cried out, "Adieu?"

What does that mean?" "I am going to bed."
"Going to bed?" "Yes, I am going to bed at my mother's."

That morning Esquiros had brought me his new book, with this dedication:

To Arsene Houssaye: Amicus amico, frater fratri.

ALPHONSE ESQUIROS.

This book is called "*Le Bonhomme Jadis*." For him this "Goodman Formerly" is an old fool who has never done any good. He condemns pitilessly all the past of France. He recalls the fairy tale of Perrault, "The Sleeping Beauty." He says that this princess, who was wounded in the hand by touching a wheel, and who went to sleep for a hundred years resembles the Legitimacy which is now reviving. "How are you, Princess?" "I am perfectly well." "You have slept very long." "What are you saying? I went to sleep last night, and I wake up this morning." "Does your Grace desire anything?" "Call my women! I wish to put on my dress of spider webs trimmed with love." "I must inform you, Princess, that all your toilettes are dreadfully out of fashion." "You

do not know what you are saying. They are in the latest style and come from Paris." "Yes, from the Paris of a hundred years ago." "Shall I dress my hair in the peacock or the hedge-hog style?" "Those styles are no longer worn." "Throw over my hair a little cloud of powder." "Powder is no longer put on the hair." "Just now we were playing at Pharaoh." "That game is no longer played." "This evening we will dance a minuet." "Nothing is danced now but the can-can." "Then I shall go to Paris, quick! my carriage!" "You only travel now by railroad." "You are mad. I shall write to my mother." "We communicate with our friends only by telegraph." "Where are my vassals?" "There are no vassals." "Is there news of the king?" "There are no more kings." "What are they doing at Versailles?" "Making the laws of the Republic." "Why this is the end of the world." "Yes, it is the end of the world that you have known." "Give me a pillow, I am going to sleep again."

Thus Esquiors buries the Goodman Formerly, and after the epitaph, he calls to mind that a

poet of the Great Republic, Longfellow, has taken for his device the Latin word *Excelsior*, "higher, always higher." Every one who has crossed a chain of mountains knows that after one summit is reached, other loftier heights declare themselves above the solid mass of rock. To these heights others succeed. Who is it that will scale the ultimate peak?

This is an image of the ascending march of societies. Higher than the programmes of '89, higher than the traditions of philosophy, higher than the eighteenth century, higher than the ideal of all the ancient political assemblies. Nevertheless, sufficient to each day is its trouble. Let us first attain these two sacred summits, the Republic and Liberty; future generations will take care of the rest. To them the office of exploring the infinite; to us the austere duty of opening the approach to the mountain, and of transmitting to successors the device "*Excelsior*."

An old Indian poem, the *Ramayana*, narrates how Vishnu, concealed under the form of a dwarf, asked of Bali, an evil god, the permission

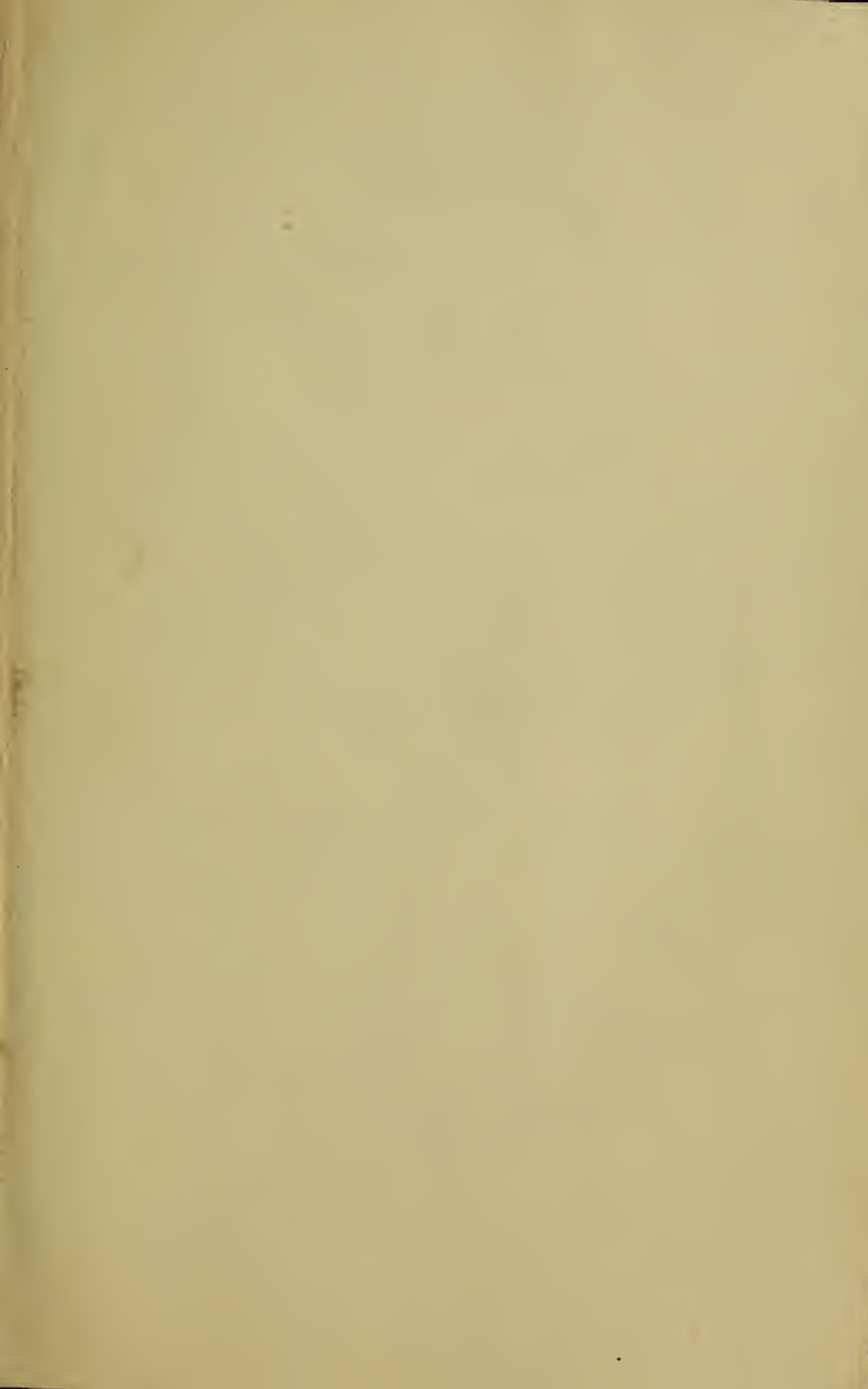
to measure the earth in three steps. Blinded as he was by the sentiment of his own strength, the proud Bali answered laughingly, "Let him try." But as soon as the dwarf had obtained that favor, he swelled into a prodigious giant form. With the first step he passed over the earth, with the second the zone of the air, with the third all the heavens of stars. "This," says Esquiros, "is the history of the people and of the human race. Grant it three steps, and it will be master of the earth. It will measure the stars floating above its head. It will seize upon the universe of ideas. Its enemies know this well, and therefore have they bound and strangled it for centuries. But to-day it is too late. The first step was taken in '89, and after this gigantic stride there is no going backwards. Height and space are opened. The human spirit mounts and will mount forever, 'Excelsior.' "

In this upward flight Esquiros counts no falls. The route of the human spirit is a dangerous one. The great Pascal saw the abyss always before him. Politicians do not see it often enough. Joseph de Maistre said, "The earth is quaking

and you want to build." When the earth quakes and one must build, it is best to take Heaven as a foundation.

Esquiros, who during the war governed the departments of the South, is to be elected Senator in the Bouches du Rhone. But what will he do in the Senate? The hour of his ideas has not yet struck. Esquiros now never appears in the tribune. Why? He has a sovereign eloquence, a learned and vivid speech, and boldness of expression. But so far as ideas are concerned, compared with him Gambetta is reactionary. He lives at Versailles in front of the park of Louis XIV., but he never enters it. As he is unforgiving towards the past, he is not willing that the past should give him hospitality, even the hospitality of its shadows. He said to me, "There is nothing but upas trees in that park. If I passed through it, I should be poisoned."









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